

RADICAL CAREER CHANGE:

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to examine the correlates of voluntary radical career change. Ninety-nine males and 20 females constituted the samples, all but 2 of whom were resident in Nelson district at the time. Subjects typically were highly educated and had careers of well above average status, prior to change. The sample members' questionnaires and subsequent interviews were completed, each of approximately 30 to 40 minutes duration. Data were obtained to provide demographic and other background information about the respondents, including job satisfaction and other factors related to their work history. Interviews were content analysed and the results together with the questionnaire data were subjected to computer analysis. This facilitated scrutiny of the frequencies of variables and associations between variables, and observation of significant differences between sub-groups. Subjects exhibited many of the reported manifestations of mid-life transition. However, an age related mid-life transition explanation for career change was not supported. The decision type employed, and the motives for change considered most important by subjects were evaluated. Individuals found to have employed a rational as opposed to an incremental decision type for change, were seen to enjoy greater benefits from the change. The goal of increasing independence was observed to be a significant aspect of the change, whereas "better fit of personal values and work" had been the prime motive for change for the largest number of subjects. Measures of social status and current well-being were taken. While status and income had dropped markedly among the majority of subjects through leaving established careers, average well-being was significantly higher than in the New Zealand population at large. Sex differences were minor, although the small size of the female sample limited conclusions about this result. Overseas findings relating to career change were largely supported.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 OVERVIEW

The root word carrus means cart or chariot, whence came the words "via cararia" or road, whence in turn carrière and career. Implicit in "career" is the idea of movement, the course through one's life in relation to occupation. This idea is intertwined with the dominant values relating to employment in capitalist societies, including New Zealand.

However, a number of individuals who have adhered to conventional career patterns with a measure of "success" in traditional terms, choose nonetheless to take a radically different direction and abandon their initial career. Many writers have attempted to explain this phenomenon by relating it to age, career stage, personality or environmental factors (e.g. Levinson et al, 1978; Constandse, 1972; Hiestand, 1971; Neapolitan, 1980; Clopton, 1973; Thomas, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980).

The rest of this chapter discusses the literature dealing with this phenomenon of career change. Career development theory is discussed, as well as the concept of mid-life transition. It is noted that the majority of research concerns men. Several specific references to women are made. Findings from studies on groups of career changers are outlined, as is the literature on subjective well-being. The second chapter outlines the methodology of this empirical study of career changers, including the ways in which the data obtained were analysed. Chapter Three describes the results of the research. The results are then discussed in the following chapter with reference to the relevant literature from New Zealand and overseas. The results are briefly summarized and in Chapter Five, the final chapter, conclusions are reached and future research directions suggested. This is followed by a list of references, and

three appendices containing copies of the interview protocol and questionnaire used in the field work, and a copy of the content analysis coding sheet used to analyse the interviews. Results from the sample of female subjects, due to its small size, are treated separately and comments made with caution.

## 1.2 EVOLUTION

### 1.2.1 Career Theory

It was not until the 1970s that the Human development and career literature began to contain any number of articles about developmental considerations pertaining to Middle Age. Prior to this, focus had been almost exclusively on the extreme ends of the lifecourse. Then even, only recently on the aged:

"The emphasis on the young has been due in part to the prevailing social values and attitudes of the first half of the 20th century which valued youth and held that socialization occurred only in the pre-adult years"

(Borland, 1978).

Another fact relating to this paucity of literature, is that our conception of middle age is itself rather a recent phenomenon. Average life expectancy in America at the turn of the century was approximately 45 years of age. By 1970 this had risen to approximately 71 years of age (Glick, 1977). Associated with this, marriage at a younger age, more effective birth control measures, smaller family sizes, closer spacing of children, and children leaving home at an earlier age, meant that parents could expect to live alone without their children for approximately 13 years after the last child left home permanently. Glick considers the increase in this post parental period, one of the most dramatic changes to happen to the family life cycle this century.

In this context, career theory had a somewhat restricted beginning. For example, it was not until the 1940s



and 1950s that it was recognized that career outcomes were not set until the 30s decade of life. The work of Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrod and Herma (1951) sowed the seeds for a large number of career stage schemas by later workers. The latest approach is one which has developed over the past decade and which encompasses and examines in detail the whole life course. Termed the life-cycle approach, it is largely the product of such writers as Levinson et al (1978), Vaillant (1977), Gould (1978) and Sheehy (1976; 1981). These all develop to some extent the work of Erikson (1950). Erikson proposed that certain social-psychological attributes evolve with the passage of time, in both an orderly and sequential way. He expanded the work of Bühler (1933) and described an 8 stage process of ego development, characterized by a series of psychosocial crises. Three of these stages occur after age 18. Jung (1933) like Erikson, had been influenced in his approach by Freud. He made a significant break by concentrating on his interest in adult development. He believed that the next opportunity for fundamental change after adolescence started at around 40, "The noon of life". The more recent writers, although not completely agreeing on age parameters for certain life tasks, nevertheless include in their life-cycle schemas, very much the same type of critical goals (see Table 1.1).

Gould (1978) is a recent writer who supports the view of development by crisis. He states:

"Mid-life, then, is every bit as turbulent as adolescence, except now we can use all this striving to blend a healthier, happier life. For unlike adolescents, in mid-life we know and can accept who we are" (p.307).

Vaillant (1977) and Levinson (1978) both regard mid-life as a time to reappraise commitments made earlier. Vaillant (1977) writes accordingly:

"As adolescence is a period for acknowledging parental flaws and discovering the truth about childhood, so the forties are a time for



reassessing and reordering the truth about adolescence and young adulthood" (pp.219-220).

Table 1.1 A comparison of several conceptualizations of adult life development.

Age	18	25	30	35	40	45	50 +
JUNG		Youth		"Noon of Life"	Middle Life		
ERIKSON		Intimacy vs. Isolation		Generativity vs. Self-Absorption			Integrity vs. Despair
VAILLANT	Intimacy; Autonomy; Mutuality		Career Success;	Consolidation Mentors Gone	Generativity;	Children	
		Career, Nuclear family; Mentor(s)		Self-Reappraisal Instinctual Reawakening			
GOULD	Tentative autonomy	Autonomous; Make commitments; prove adult competence	Marriage & career established; Desire to "Be What One Is."	Question self, values, life awareness of 'time squeeze.' Push to "make it big" in career.	Instability Discomfort	"Die is Cast." Personality set. Children, spouse importance, reconciliation, acceptance.	
LEVINSON	Leaving the family	Getting into the adult world	Transitional Period	Settling Down Mid-Life Transition Becoming One's Own Man		Middle adulthood	
SHEEHY	Pulling Up Roots	The trying 20s	Catch-30 Rooting and Extending	Switch 40s The Deadline Decade		Renewal or Resignation	

Adapted from Wilhelm (1976)

Note. Quoted from "The Maturation of Career Theory" by J. Sonnenfeld and J.P. Kotter, 1982, Human Relations, p.31.

Levinson et al (1978) theorize with four eras in the life-cycle:

- (1) Childhood and Adolescence 0 - 22
- (2) Early Adulthood 17 - 45
- (3) Middle Adulthood 40 - 65
- (4) Late Adulthood 60 - ?

These eras overlap where one era is being completed and the next begun. Such periods, termed transitions, are times particularly prone to developmental crises. Hence the increased reference to the mid-life transition as the mid-life crisis. The latter term is misleading. The theory and evidence does recognize that the majority of

individuals, if not all individuals, pass through a distinctive mid-life developmental period. This is recognizable by characteristic changes and other manifestations, as a transition. It is likewise emphasized however, that this is not a time of crisis for all people. Levinson (1978) writes about the mid-life transition:

"Some men do very little questioning or searching during the mid-life transition. They are apparently untroubled by difficult questions regarding the meaning, value and direction of their lives. Other men realize that the character of their lives is changing, but the process is not a painful one. They are in a manageable transition, one without crisis" (p.60).

Two tasks must be completed during this stage: (1) individuals must reappraise past life structures, and (2) individuals must begin to make choices which will modify earlier structures and provide a basis for living in middle adulthood. Levinson (1978) considers the mid-life transition to last about five years, and doubts that a true mid-life transition can begin before age 38 or after 43.

Nevertheless, some theorists challenge the assumption that "life inherently cycles" in some particular developing way, and suggest that certain contextual factors have a greater impact on the formation of attitudes than differences in age. Theorists such as Neugarten (1968) and Lowenthal (1975), consider that common sociocultural expectations as well as factors such as race, sex, and social class membership, exert an inexorable influence over the life course, and may blunt or even alter the way in which developmental stages occur. While adding to the diversity of worthwhile mid-life considerations, it is yet to be seen if these approaches have the predictive utility of some of the life-cycle approaches. Chronological years lived, although limited, is still a most suitable basis for distinguishing groups of people at different points of development.



The current thrust of development of life-cycle theory is in the direction of integrating behaviour across the whole life of the individual. With the increasing amount of research in this area, more and more life-course variables have been found to be a part of career development at mid-life. Bartolome and Evans' (1979) study of 513 managers, identified five paths which individuals take through the mid-life transition, all of which incorporate an increased involvement of private life concerns into career decisions.

### 1.2.2 Mid-life transition

Numerous authors have described symptoms of this period. The era has been termed Midolence by McMorro (1974) due to its resemblance to adolescence, often being such a time when a number of aspects of a mans life e.g. mental, physical, emotional and spiritual are "shaken to the core". It has also been referred to as mid-life crisis, male menopause, metapause, and the male climacteric (Sagal and De Blassie, 1981). Constandse (1972) identifies the situation as:

"When men express a growing dissatisfaction with their work by complaining about subjects that never seemed to bother them in the past, such as the fatigue of commuting or the growth of bureaucracy that stifles initiative . . . restlessness and irritability followed by periods of depression are stronger and more significant clues . . . men begin to neglect their wives, think about extra-marital affairs, indulge in gambling, drift into alcoholism or drugs, speculate with the family savings in the stockmarket, or lose interest in their children's education".

Such a gloomy future would be enough to cause the heartiest of males in his thirties, to enter depression. The reality of life is seldom so extreme. Such writing does illustrate a danger, however, of lapsing into compiling exhaustive

lists of any attitudes or behaviours which may have been recorded in an age cohort. This, without regard for their frequency in, or their specificity to, any developmental era.

Super and Hall (1978) in a review of the research on mid-career, revealed a number of issues which may arise at this stage. These included awareness of advancing age, body changes related to aging, and also awareness of death. These issues included the knowledge of how many career goals have been or will be attained, and the subsequent search for new life goals. Super and Hall also referred to a marked change in both family and work relationships, a sense of work obsolescence and decreased job mobility, and an increased concern for job security. Murphy and Burck (1976) described two criteria from which they considered it was possible to define a developmental stage. Firstly, the occurrence of common major external events, and internal experiences at a similar time in the life span of individuals. Secondly, following these characteristic events and experiences, there must be evidence of a permanent change in the lives of these individuals. Murphy and Burck gave examples of common inner experiences of the mid-life transition as:

- decreased positive self concept
- questioning of the meaning of life
- examination of personal values
- broad dissatisfaction with life
- stock taking, or comparing earlier goals to present attainments.

Jacques (1965) wrote:

"the reality and inevitability of one's own eventual death . . . is the central and crucial feature of the mid-life phase".

Many writers concur that there becomes a preoccupation with one's own mortality, men viewing their age in terms of years left to live rather than years lived. Kets de Vries (1978) notes a growing concern with "body monitoring", the



urge to keep the middle aged body at given levels of performance.

A man must give up certain of his youthful qualities, some with regret, some perhaps with relief or satisfaction - while retaining and transforming other qualities that he can integrate into his new life. He must also discover the good aspects associated with being "older". This process is carried on with the backdrop of the man's awareness that he is undergoing a number of subtle and other not so subtle physical changes. After the late 30s a man cannot run so fast, lift so much, do with as little sleep as before. His physical sensation of sex is different - more diffuse, and the visible aspects of his physical decline become more obvious. With an added pre-occupation with death the man seeks to give new meaning to his life, and this is a significant aspect of a possible change in values and attitudes. Related to a man's wish for immortality is his image of legacy, whether this may involve family, work, or other valued contributions. He seeks to leave something which will stand the test of time, something which he now realizes his body is failing to do.

The common external events considered by Murphy and Burck (1976) as developmental stage criteria, are less well recorded in psychologically oriented writing than are inner experiences. Sociological writing describes such events as the empty nest phenomenon (Heald, 1977). The change in family relationships as the children leave home, causes parents to more realistically assess their own futures. Further external events include the attainment of peak career position and economic power, and the threat to job security from younger men and new techniques i.e. competition and obsolescence. Pressures for early retirement, and the problem of dependent aged parents have also been reported. Heddesheimer (1976) divides these events into three gross categories of family, job, and societal changes.

Murphy and Burcks' (1976) second criterion, namely that of evidence of a permanent change in the lives of the individuals, is fulfilled they maintain by:

". . . frequent reports of a revival in self concept occurring in the late 40s along with an increased attentiveness to inner concerns and a reconciliation with one's present life situation or a transfer of energy to more satisfying areas of life."

Murphy and Burck conclude that their evidence meets the criteria and that a mid-life developmental stage does exist. There appears little doubt that the majority of individuals pass through a perceptible transition stage during their middle years. This likely results in many of the manifestations described in the literature. Unfortunately, research is less conclusive in relation to whether this stage is one fitting a hierarchical schema, is tied to age, or is the product of circumstance.

### 1.3 MID-LIFE CAREER CHANGE

Regardless of present trends, the majority of men in our Western culture regard their working life as one of life's central elements. The impact of career type on living location, marriage, family and social interactions, as well as the impact of these latter variables in turn, on career type, has received varying degrees of attention from researchers. It is obvious, that for a man who has followed a well defined career and then, as Krantz (1978) would put it, made a "Radical Career Change", that he is likely to experience significant changes in his external environment. These changes may cause, or more likely may have been caused by, internal changes.

Numerous writers report that a radical career change is one reaction to the mid-life transition. Thomas (1979) looking at 73 men who had voluntarily changed from higher to lower status careers, failed to find adequate support either for a Counterculture explanation or a Macrosocial explanation (changes in the wider socioeconomic sphere, speeding up staff obsolescence and also causing demographic changes). Evidence suggested that "psychological changes



that occur at mid-life" triggered the career re-direction. Of the total number of respondents, 76% indicated that they had changed careers to find more meaningful work, 69% had changed to bring about a better fit of work and values. This is evidence of a developmental explanation for mid-life career change.

Golembiewski (1978) believes that an individual may precipitate a mid-career crisis as a result of a panic reaction to a mid-life transition with one of the possible results being a change in profession. He reports that a 1972 survey of managers indicated that nearly one half were considering a complete change of career. He considers the late 30s and early 40s to be the time most of such mid-career changing takes place, if occurring at all.

Hiestand (1971) suggests that a mid-life career change is often a response to a host of other mid-life developments such as completion of family, marital difficulties (e.g. divorce, separation or death of spouse), or early pension rights.

Sonnenfeld (1978) reports on several longitudinal career studies which tracked people for ten year intervals or longer over the previous 30 years. He found that even in the face of barriers to employment in certain occupations, there was an outstanding peak in job mobility for those in their mid 30s to mid 40s. He considered that candidates for their second careers tended to be in their 40s and report perceived discrepancies between personal aspirations and current opportunities for achievement and promotion.

Hines (1979) reports on the job instability of 1225 New Zealand male professionals and managers. His data shows a peak of instability between ages 35 and 45. This peak occurs some five years later for university graduates than for non-graduates, presumably accounting for the time spent at university. His data suggests that time in employment, not age, is the prerequisite for job change.

Constandse (1972) regarded the phenomenon seen in managers as the reaction to a common frustration in these years. By his early 40s a man in business, whether in a line or staff position, has to confront whether or not he is a terminal case, not destined for further promotion. Additionally young, ambitious, well trained newcomers are pushing hard from below. The day has arrived when the dream of reaching the top, one he has always regarded as realistic is seen as only that - a dream. It may be very hard to admit even to oneself for a number of years. The man has to face quite possibly a lateral "promotion" where he becomes stuck doing the same things. Many find that they are stuck for further reasons, including the benefit schemes they have contributed to over the years or financial commitments possibly towards their children's tertiary education. Schlossberg (1977) refers to this as "the boxed in phenomenon", and lists a number of reasons why women also may experience this. In reference to The United States, she comments that almost two-thirds of working women are either single, divorced, widowed, separated, or have husbands who are low income earners. She states:

". . . more women are supporting themselves, often as heads of households, for longer periods of time".

Schlossberg further believes that the boxed in feeling in women is often intensified by their being trapped in low paying, tedious jobs. Constandse (1972) believes many men try to cope with the situation by starting a new career, often trying to get away from the rat race to start their own business. The change he believes is seldom made for financial reasons.

Wortley and Amatea (1982) in their framework for mapping adult development, consider Family, Intimacy, Inner life, and Career, over 6 time periods from age 20 to death. In the career section for the mid-life category they discuss as an interior process "redefining work role/goals, in light of changing values/priorities/possibilities". As an exterior event they state:



"possible mid-life career change  
 : to meet changing personal values and  
 priorities or  
 : to develop own business or  
 : forced change due to age related  
 organizational displacement".

Neapolitan (1980) studied 25 individuals who had made radical voluntary occupational changes in mid career. These he matched with 25 people remaining in each respective occupation vacated by changers. All 25 changers stated that they were dissatisfied with their previous occupations, 9 non-changers also expressing dissatisfaction with their present jobs. Sources of dissatisfaction, such as poor relationships with co-workers or superiors are more likely to lead to job, rather than to career change. Neapolitan (1980) notes that the freedom and knowledge a person has in choosing his or her first occupation, increases the probability that the occupation will be congruent with the person's work orientations, and provide satisfaction in mid-career. Thirty-seven of the 50 subjects either drifted in or were coerced into their first occupation, corresponding to the majority of dissatisfied respondents. Ten changers entered occupations related to previous hobbies. Neapolitan (1980) found that the main deterrents from career change were seen by his subjects as lack of financial support for the change, and the presence of dependents (also Clopton, 1973; Isaacson, 1981). Isaacson (1981) suggests that:

"voluntary career change may be repressed or avoided by some men because of their concern that such a change might suggest indecision or instability".

Vaitenas and Weiner (1977) presented evidence that mid-life career changers also showed a marked fear of failure. There is also no doubt that such a factor as labour market considerations are also influential.

Henton, Russell and Koval (1983) took a different approach and studied spousal perceptions of mid-life career change by interviewing the wives of 20 changers. Whereas:

- 12% of wives reported expectations of more finances as the major reason for change,
- 41% of the families actually took a downturn as a result of the change.
- 64% of wives perceived themselves as encouraging of their spouses work decisions, and facilitative in the change.
- 42%+ve ) Friends in general were perceived to  
53%-ve ) show somewhat less support.
- Only
- 35% perceived the career changers' parents to be positive towards the shift whereas
- 65% thought their own parents supported the change (Food for interesting conjecture).
- All the career changers in this study had sought further education prior to the change.
- 59% of wives said their husbands spent more time with the family following the career change than before.
- 47%+ve ) Overall, the positive effects as far as  
17%-ve ) the marital relationship was concerned  
36% no ) generally outweighed many of the hardships  
effect ) associated with the career change.
- Sixty-four percent perceived an improvement in their spouses positive feelings about self. An even greater number considered their own feelings about self to have improved.

Industrial management is naturally interested to know why a person would be willing to leave a well paying job,



often times with high security, and go into another career, often with less pay and no security. The cost to an organization of such events can be considerable. Developmental psychologists want to know what motivates such change in order to better understand life cycle development (Thomas, 1975). Many researchers now believe that an understanding of middle-age is essential for a life-span understanding of aging.

Thomas (1977) considers that career change by itself is only a rough indicator of what is going on in an individual's life during the mid-life period, similarly as divorce is a very gross indicator of the quality of family life:

" . . . some persons hang onto their jobs until retirement despite intense distaste for the work, while others choose to change careers even when their old jobs were still satisfactory."

In stating this, Thomas poses the exact questions. Who exactly? Which persons? Is there any way of identifying the individuals who belong to those groups, without prior knowledge of which group they do belong to?

Career decisions at mid-life are quite naturally tied to the reassessed level of significance which the individual is going to place on work in the middle adulthood life-structure. With the individual's tendency to internalize at mid-life and seek more meaningful activities, is an overall desire for more intrinsics in the total life sphere. Depending on his decision about the reassessment question above, the individual decides by which approach to work he can best achieve these lifestyle intrinsics by adopting a position on what Andrisani and Miljus (1977) call the Intrinsic-Extrinsic preference distinction. The individual who adopts an extrinsic value orientation, views work principally in terms of its instrumental character. Work therefore possesses very little if any value in and of itself, but rather serves as a central means to certain ends which normally are not work-centred. These ends include financial security, a comfortable material standard of living,



access to leisure activities, and social status both at the work place and within the community.

The adoption by an individual on the other hand of an intrinsic value orientation towards work, means that he regards it far beyond its instrumental utility. He considers it as important for his satisfaction and fulfilment of life. It is looked to, to provide challenges, responsibilities, provide opportunities to make creative decisions and express a wide range of talents and aptitudes.

Bamundo and Kopelman (1980) examined yet again the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction, as moderated by a number of different factors including age. Higher status occupational groups (e.g. professionals, managers) are much more highly job involved and view their work as more central to their lives than do lower occupational groups. In addition, work satisfaction tended to contribute more to life satisfaction than did nonwork satisfaction for this group. In five age categories ranging from 20 to 69, they found that the job satisfaction - life satisfaction correlation was smallest for those aged 30-39 (.28) and largest for those aged 40-49 (.45). The authors speculated that because the ages 40-45 incorporate the mid-life transition and its manifestations (Levinson 1978) this may explain why the job attitudes of men are particularly salient to life satisfaction during this decade of the forties.

Thomas (1980) discarded an earlier typology (Thomas, 1976) in favour of one which described the motive for the career change. He attempted to make the judgement of major career change objective by utilizing the designations of Hiestand (1971). These distinguish between 45 degree changes which are ones of minor discontinuity with previous careers and 90 degree changes where major discontinuity is evident. Thomas also incorporated the formulations of Bell (1975) who had evaluated whether training for the former career was necessary and sufficient for the new career. Thomas obtained subjects by modified referral sampling, a technique for "reaching a widely scattered population for whom no central

reference was available". Referral consisted of (a) Personnel Officers in large companies, and (b) College placement services, providing names of career changers. These changers when interviewed were likewise asked to give names of other changers. Thomas (1980) found salary considerations were one of the first variables to discard as the motivation of career change. Of the total sample only:

11% indicated that they were important in the career change decision. The majority of the remainder actually took salary cuts with their change.

Furthermore only

13% were looking for added security in their new career. For

18% the change was not truly voluntary. They were either laid off, or they changed for health reasons.

26% changed to have more time with their families.

23% for time for recreation.

20% in order to live in a better locality. He found no unique family characteristics to account for changes.

60% of the wives weren't working, so the presence of a spousal income was not there to assist the change.

74% had dependent children at the time of the change, so that diminished parental responsibility was also not a significant factor.

48% indicated that "a better fit of values and work" was a very important factor in deciding to change, an additional

21% said it was of some importance.

53% said "more meaningful work was a very important factor" with an additional

23% saying it was of some importance.



Thomas further used the typology of Murray et al (1971) to describe relative amounts of pressure from self and environment for change. On the basis of Likert type items about the extent of their personal desire for career change, four different groups of career changers could be distinguished. Thomas provided alternative quadrant labels (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2  
Typology of Career Changers

		Pressure from self to change	
		Low	High
Pressure from environment to change	Low	(1) "Drift-outs" 17 (Routine) <sup>a</sup>	(2) "Opt-outs" 12 (Self-determined)
	High	(4) "Force-outs" 25 (Situation-determined)	(3) "Bow-outs" 19 (Accommodation)

<sup>a</sup> Titles in parentheses are those used by Murray *et al.* (1971) in their original formulation of this typology.

Note. Quoted from "A Typology of Mid-Life Career Changers" by L.E. Thomas, 1980, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, p.178.

In Thomas's (1980) study, respondents in the different quadrants were found to differ significantly on a number of variables concerning both background and motivation for change (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3

Characteristics of Various Types of Career Changers <sup>a</sup>			
"Drift-outs"	"Opt-outs"	"Force-outs"	"Bow-outs"
		Most radical change in career	Least radical change in career
	Most satisfied with career change		Least satisfied with career change
		Least previous education	Most previous education
	Most additional education	Least additional education	
Took longest time to make the change		Took least time to make the change	
		Least influenced by achievement	Most influenced by achievement
	Most influenced by values	Least influenced by values	

<sup>a</sup> All indicated differences are significant at the .05 level, or beyond (using the  $X^2$  statistic).

Note. Quoted from "A Typology of Mid-Life Career Changers" by L.E. Thomas, 1980, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, p.180.



Heddesheimer (1976) has likewise approached mid-life career change using the typology of Murray et al (1971) but giving different labels of: Routine, Self Determined, Self Directed Accommodation, and Situationally Determined Career, for quadrants 1 to 4 respectively.

Murray et al (1971) developed an interview format to complete a Life Pattern Chart to test their typology (see Table 1.2). They loosely referred to leisure as all non-work activity: "there appear to be two conceptually simple realms of activity in adult life; work and leisure". They alluded to the significance non-work activity may have on work activity.

"There is a connection, at least subjectively, between a persons leisure and work activity. Thus the nature of a job history may depend on the nature of a leisure history for many individuals".

Their questionnaire was usefully designed to elicit information on the more significant variables considered associated with career change.

Clopton (1973) looked at a specific group of career changers, namely those who had recently completed or were pursuing an advanced academic degree to facilitate the change. These he matched with the same number of "persisters" and attempted to find variables which distinguished the two groups. He found no evidence of difference in childhood experiences but some evidence of difference in adult experiences:

20% of the career shifters but no persisters had been divorced or separated

45% of the shifters as compared with

15% of the persisters had had personal counselling or psychotherapy. Career shifters also had a higher sense of self esteem, and expressed concerns more often about their own mortality.

Clopton found that individuals undertaking career change at mid-life were not "deviant" personalities, but rather

appeared to be of above average emotional adjustment.

Thomas (1980) addressed an additional consideration, satisfaction with the new job. He reported differences between middle class and working class in reasons for leaving jobs, the factors leading to an individual changing from a blue collar job being principally poor health and redundancy. He also found differences between these groups in that forced career change for blue collar workers often had an effect of "physical and psychological deterioration".

62% of his middle class group looked on their new job as "very rewarding" and an additional 34% as "on the whole favourable".

56% responded that they would like to be in the same career in five years time.

33% same type, "but with some changes", and only 11% said that they would prefer to be doing "something substantially different" in five years.

Armstrong (1981) described an approach to career change which she termed incremental. This is where the emphasis is on "satisficing" rather than "optimizing" (e.g. pain avoidance rather than pleasure seeking). The decision maker seeks a workable and acceptable solution to the problem rather than an ideal one. The approach is in contrast to a rational one characterised by a wider range of alternatives, a broader information base, and selection of an alternative which often necessitates a major change.

Armstrong (1981) in her study of mid-life career changers, 66% of whom were women, and all of who were employing further education to facilitate the change, found that marginal career goals were in fact associated with the incremental decision pattern. They showed also a very low success rate (under 50%). Rational approaches, associated with more radical change, showed a much higher success rate (78%).



#### 1.4 SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Rousseau placed the source of happiness in a good bank account, a good cook, and a good digestion. Economists have traditionally assumed the priority of material wealth in optimizing happiness (Lane, 1978). Up until the 1970s the bulk of literature on Subjective Well-being (SWB), including happiness, life satisfaction and positive affect considered SWB to be the function of objective circumstances, such as age, health, education, income, marital status and job satisfaction. Wilson (1967), in his review of the SWB literature, wrote that those with the most advantages were happiest. He generated a profile of the happiest person by a number of demographic and other characteristics. An increasing amount of subsequent research has questioned this conclusion and similar conclusions reached by other analysts.

Diener (1984) in his review of the SWB literature, examined the objective conditions thought to be SWB correlates. He reported a large number of studies where income was positively related to SWB.

In the most significant of these, Easterlin (1974) reviewed 30 studies where it was found that wealthier people are happier than poorer people within specific countries. He found also that people in wealthier countries report higher SWB than people in third world countries. Diener (1984) nonetheless challenged the belief that absolute levels of income are critical to happiness, suggesting several reasons for the reported results. He proposed that status and power, covarying with income, may be responsible for the effect of income on SWB. A related interpretation is that SWB is influenced by an individual's perception of their income, relative to significant others.

Research on age and gender as SWB correlates has been inconclusive to date. Education and SWB exhibit little relationship, although Campbell (1981) suggested that as well as serving as a resource, extended education may raise aspirations and inform the individual of alternative types



of life. Employment, job satisfaction, marriage, social contact, and health, appear to be related to SWB (Diener, 1984). However, notwithstanding the above findings, the variance accounted for by those objective variables is not large. Diener concluded:

" . . . it seems likely that subjective well-being will not be accounted for by a handful of potent variables, because of the immense number of factors that can influence it".

Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) found that while subjects rated perceived health as one of the most important aspects of happiness, in reality it proved to be only the eighth strongest predictor of life satisfaction. Kammann and Campbell (1982) likewise reported that individuals closely ally good health with happiness. They found that the way people perceived the relative importance of different objective conditions, in "causing" happiness, contrasted with the actual relationships. Their evaluation of previous research lead them to believe that, with the exception of being married and being employed, social and environmental circumstances are virtually unrelated to happiness. This viewpoint is upheld by the programme of empirical research in New Zealand, and the results obtained from this programme by Irwin (1979) and Kammann (1982, 1983, 1984). Kammann and Campbell (1982) after examination of the literature, and their own New Zealand data concluded:

" . . . the pursuit of health, many friends, greater intelligence, a higher income, a home in the country, and a white collar job are not rationally in pursuit of happiness itself".

Kammann (1983) found that New Zealanders have similar distributions of satisfactions and happiness as subjects in North American studies.

Kammann and Flett (1983) report on the characteristics of Affectometer 2, their scale of well-being, which evaluates positive and negative feelings in the respondent's recent experience. Reliability and validity data are

extremely promising (Kammann and Flett, 1983; Kammann et al, 1979). Diener (1984) writes:

"Given the favourable data on Kammann and Flett's (1983) Affectometer, it deserves to be a widely used measure of the frequency of positive and negative affect. The high level of internal homogeneity suggests that the scale does indeed measure the unitary frequency of positive affect dimension. It has very high convergence with other SWB scales (an average of .70)".

In the present study, with respect to a New Zealand sample of career changers it proved possible to examine both the New Zealand and overseas findings relating to mid-life career change. The questions were posed:

(1) Would a group of New Zealand career changers have many demographic and other background characteristics in common? And (2) Would they exhibit similar motivations for change to their overseas counterparts? After investigating the different correlates of career change, the present study hoped to determine whether happiness is affected as predicted by the literature.

## CHAPTER TWO

## METHOD

## 2.1 RATIONALE

New Zealand society and geography provide diverse employment and lifestyle opportunities. Society here nonetheless has been very much moulded by the Protestant work ethic. The "forty-hour week" is an integral part of the industrial and commercial infrastructure. The priority individuals give work and the progression of their work role through life, has received considerable research attention. However, published research on career development in New Zealand, particularly as it relates to the middle years of the human life cycle, is very limited.

The primary aim of this research was to examine a particular career phenomenon, "Mid-life career change", which has received some attention in specialist literature overseas. This exploratory study examines a New Zealand sample, to elucidate the characteristics of those who radically change careers, and to see whether or not a number of overseas findings about this phenomenon apply here. In particular, the findings of Thomas (1980) and Armstrong (1981) are compared with the findings from the New Zealand sample. Finally, Kammann's work on happiness and well-being is followed up in this unusual but relevant group. To this end, the sample is compared with the wider population in New Zealand using the Affectometer 2, a scale of subjective well-being (Kammann and Flett, 1983).

## 2.2 SAMPLE

Subjects were sought of either sex. They were selected on the criteria that:

- (1) They had made a voluntary, radical departure from a career and
- (2) Evidence suggested that they had previously had some significant degree of commitment to their initial career.



Voluntary was defined to exclude those who were under threat of losing their job. Radical was defined as a 90 degree change using the formulation of Hiestand (1971). He described 45 degree changes as ones involving relatively minor discontinuity with former careers. Ninety degree changes involved major discontinuity. Commitment was defined as the number of years spent following a specific occupational direction and/or years spent attaining any necessary qualifications. This corresponds with the approach of De Amicus (1976) who sees commitment as both activity and status. Commitment comes under different guises, one being investment of time, money or energy.

Age and sex were not selection criteria, although these variables were indirectly affected by the other criteria. A number of younger potential subjects were excluded due to lack of evidence of commitment. Their change was perhaps a manifestation of the "exploration" career stage (Super et al, 1957). A number of older subjects were also excluded to avoid confoundings with "retirement".

Recency of change was also not a selection criterion. The modal number of years since the change for the subjects was 3 years and their ages just prior to career change ranged from 23 to 58 years.

Non-random referral (or snowball) sampling was used (Welch, 1975) a type which Thomas (1980) agrees is necessary for ". . . reaching a widely scattered population for whom no central reference is available". It involved contacting a number of businesses and public authorities to enquire about possible subjects. The authors of a book on local arts and crafts people (Ginivan, 1983) were consulted with some success. Three communities were also visited. Ultimately however, the technique relied upon the interest and good nature of the few known prospective subjects. The initial sample pool created, was expanded by referrals from these subjects and by their acquaintances. Much interest was shown in the research, with virtually all individuals

contacted being exceptionally cooperative; each person could usually provide the names of one or two possible subjects to follow up.

There was some pessimism expressed however about the investigator's intention to contact 100 or more people fulfilling the selection criteria, within the same district. The reaction was often one of surprise to learn that there were quite a number of these individuals in the same area. Doubtless there are a great number more.

The sample obtained, consisted of 135 individuals. All but 2 subjects included in the sample for analysis, had permanent addresses within the Nelson district.

Fifty percent (50%) of the sample were living in an urban environment and a further 39% in a definite rural setting. The remainder of 11% were living in what could be classed as a semi-rural environment e.g. the outskirts of a small town.

It was recognized that women who leave careers to start families may well fulfil the selection criteria. One could hypothesize that a moderately large group of such subjects existed in the wider population. A decision was made not to include such cases. This investigator acknowledges the definite merit in undertaking study of this group of changers, but as a distinct group.

This strategy is based partly on practical considerations. To keep the study to manageable proportions, the intention was not only to limit the sample size, but also to limit the types of changers in the sample.

Males fulfilling the selection criteria were more readily available than females. This was due in part no doubt to the exclusion of those leaving careers to become mothers. Associated with this is the definition of commitment in this study.

Commitment as measured in this research (i.e. number of years in the initial career) is often lower for females due to child rearing roles.



Subjects typically came from higher status occupations. Socio-economic status was measured for initial career, current occupation and also for the occupation of the subject's father. "A Revision of Socio-economic indices for New Zealand" (Johnston, 1983) was used. This gives a status rating between 6 (low) and 1 (high). Index scores had been derived by giving equal weighting to income and educational background.

Krause (1971) wrote ". . . the concept of career loses its meaning as one goes downward in the occupational hierarchy". Such individuals have more defined career paths and are traditionally more likely to stay within their established careers (Parnes et al, 1975). Higher occupational groups are more highly job involved and view their work as more central to their lives than do lower occupational groups (Bamundo and Kopelman, 1980).

The Nelson district was felt to be a potentially good source of subjects, as it represents to some extent an "alternative" living environment. This is to say that it has a number of characteristics which draw people to whom lifestyle is of paramount importance. In particular, lifestyles which would allow them to relate more to the physical attributes of their environment as well as leaving them relatively isolated from the haste dictated by business activities in the larger cities. Such an environment is similar in many respects to Sante Fee (USA), the source of subjects for the book "Radical Career Change" (Krantz, 1978).

## 2.3 DATA COLLECTION

### 2.3.1 Research Instruments

#### (a) The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was constructed (see Appendix A) with before change, after change, and present time sections. It consisted of a number of biodata and life-pattern questions from the guidelines of Murray, Powers and Havighurst (1971). A job satisfaction scale was included (Schuessler, 1982) as were higher order need strength and life satisfaction



scales (Warr, Cook and Wall, 1979). The final pages consisted of the Affectometer 2, a New Zealand normed inventory measuring subjective well-being (Kammann and Flett, 1983).

The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of five subjects. This was primarily to determine comprehension of the items and the time taken for completion. Comprehension was satisfactory and the average time taken for completion was 30 minutes, which was considered practicable.

(b) The Interview

An interview schedule was developed (see Appendix B) consisting of 25 questions. Most of these questions encouraged open ended responses, and were of a type not suitable to include in the questionnaire. The interviews often developed at tangents to the specific questions, and a great deal of information was obtained. Interviews were tape-recorded with the subject's consent. Beyond an initial five or so minutes, this did not appear to inhibit responses. Duration was usually around 45 minutes, with a few interviews lasting over two hours.

2.3.2 Research Procedure

The majority of the subjects were approached in person by the investigator. They were invited to participate. If willing, they were then handed a questionnaire and a stamped addressed envelope. The remainder were contacted by telephone and the questionnaire was sent out to them. Subjects were encouraged to return the questionnaire, regardless of whether or not they finally decided to complete it. Subjects who did not return their questionnaires were reminded to, by telephone, on up to a maximum of three occasions.

On the return of a completed questionnaire, each subject was contacted by telephone and a time for the interview was arranged at a place of their convenience. The majority of interviews took place in the private homes of the subjects. For a large group of the remainder, interviews

were conducted at their places of work, and for the rest, at such places of convenience as restaurants and the author's home.

## 2.4 RESPONSE RATES

One hundred and thirty-five (135) suitable subjects were approached; 113 males and 22 females. Of these, one male declined to participate, showing interest, yet saying he was too busy.

One hundred and twenty-four (124) subjects returned completed questionnaires, a response rate of 93%. After the subsequent interviews, five subjects were excluded from analysis. One because his change consisted of returning to a previous career, and two others because their responses to both questionnaire and/or interview were incomplete and could not be resolved. A further subject was excluded because his change did not constitute a 90 degree change, and a fifth subject because it transpired during the interview that the change had essentially been an involuntary one, in that redundancy for him was inevitable and imminent (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Response Rate

	Males	Females	Totals
Questionnaires Issued	112	22	134
———— Percentages	84%	16%	-
Questionnaires Completed	103	21	124
———— Percentages	83%	17%	-
Total Included in Analyses	99	20	119
———— Percentages	83%	17%	

## 2.5 DATA ANALYSES

### 2.5.1 Content Analysis

The technique of content analysis was developed from Babbie (1973) and Crano and Brewer (1973). After 20 interviews had been recorded, a content analysis coding sheet



(see Appendix C) was developed and used with the tape-recorded interviews. The level of the analysis was coarse, and together with the use of the coding sheet this removed a great deal of any potential for subjectivity.

A proportion of the interview content had often already been discussed when the prospective subject had first been contacted. There were also a number of other opportunities for some of the subjects to expand on their life history. In addition, a number of the subjects were known to the author, or the author's friends. This meant that in some cases significant additional information was obtained, which was also used to interpret the subject's offered information. For the above reasons, a coding reliability check was deemed unfeasible. Confidence was considered justified, in that additional corroborative information outside the tape-recording or the questionnaire was often available. The interview and questionnaire information was analysed with the assumption that the subject had been truthful.

#### 2.5.2 Statistical Analyses

Data from both the content analysed interviews and the questionnaires was analysed using a Burroughs B6900 computer.

The bulk of the analyses were completed using only the data from the 99 males. It was decided not to include the 20 females to: ". . . avoid confounding the findings by the introduction of sex related variables whose effects might be difficult to evaluate" (Clopton, 1973). The data from the female subjects was analysed separately however, and comparisons were made.

SPSS; Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, was used. Initially subprogram FREQUENCIES was employed to obtain frequencies for each possible response for the 176 entered or derived variables. Subprogram CROSSTABS was subsequently utilized where appropriate. Responses on selected variables were cross-tabulated with responses from the same individual on other selected variables. Numbers



of cases falling within each possible combination could be noted, and measures of association between responses on the different variables computed.

Subprogram BREAKDOWN was also used to observe any differences between mean values of a dependent variable on different categories of a nominated independent variable. Statistical significance of any differences were also examined.

Subprogram NPAR TESTS was used and Wilcoxon matched pairs signed ranks tests, and McNemar tests performed. These were specifically used to determine statistical significances of any differences between values of the same variable measured at two different times.

Graphs and histograms were produced by package PLOT 79 on a Burroughs B6900 machine, using a Hewlett-Packard Plotter.

## CHAPTER THREE

## RESULTS

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of this study are presented under five major section headings. The first four sections deal with data from the 99 males, and the fifth with data from the 20 females.

The first section (3.2) presents background information on the male sample, not directly related to their careers. Attitudes towards employment, and the characteristics of initial and present career are next examined in some detail (3.3). The section which follows (3.4) deals with the decision to leave the initial career. Findings are presented in such a way as to enable comparisons to be made with the findings of other investigators. The last section to deal exclusively with data from the male sample (3.5) describes aspects of the subjects' present lives. Here results obtained from using the well-being scales of Kammann and Flett (1983) are presented.

The final section (3.6) deals with the data of 20 female subjects. Differences from the results with males are highlighted, even though practical significance is reduced due to the small size of this female sample.

Conventions relating to the reporting of statistics are adhered to, as outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1983). One exception to this is the reporting of probability ( $p$ ) values rather than significance ( $\alpha$ ) levels. Moore (1979) discusses this issue at length. He argues persuasively that it is more appropriate with research of this type, to allow the reader to make his own deductions from the results.

In the statistical analyses, the Chi-square test of significance was used for  $k$  samples of nominal data. For  $k$  samples of ordinal data, the significance of Kendalls tau is reported. Where two samples were related (e.g. before

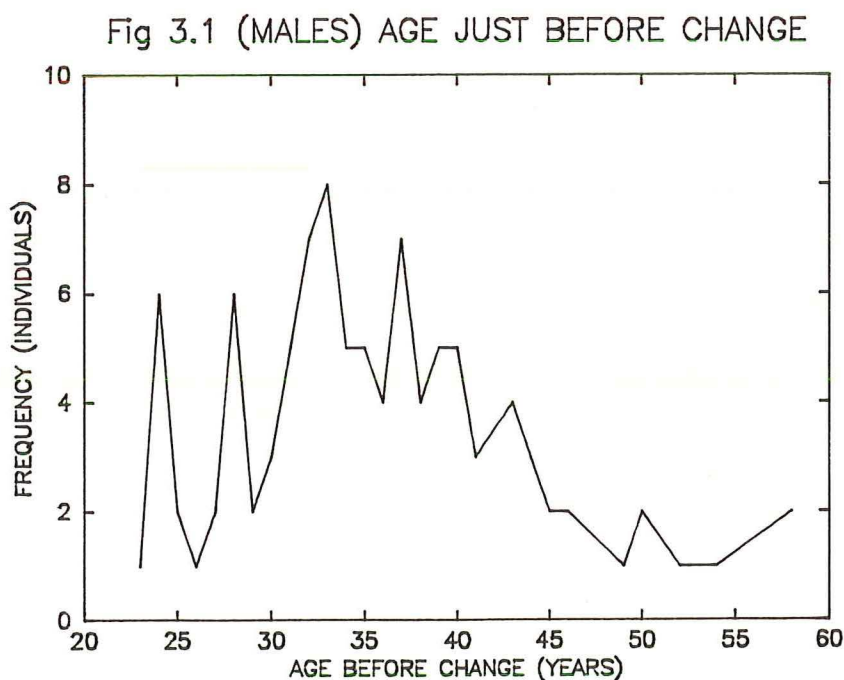
change and after change measures of the same variable), the following tests of significance were used:

- (1) McNemar test; for nominal level variables,
- (2) Wilcoxon matched pairs signed ranks test; for ordinal level variables.

Measures of association were computed;  $C$  (Contingency coefficients) for nominal level variables and Kendalls tau  $B$  is reported for ordinal level variables. Kendalls tau  $B$  is reported for square crosstabulation tables, and Kendalls tau  $C$  is reported for rectangular tables (i.e. for ordinal data, Kendalls Tau was used both as a test of significance, and as a measure of association!). Anovas were computed, and probability of  $F$  values reported when dependent variables were of a meaningful discrete or continuous nature, and were normally distributed. To compare the subjects' mean score on the Affectometer 2, with that of the New Zealand normative sample, a  $t$  test was used.

### 3.2 BACKGROUNDS

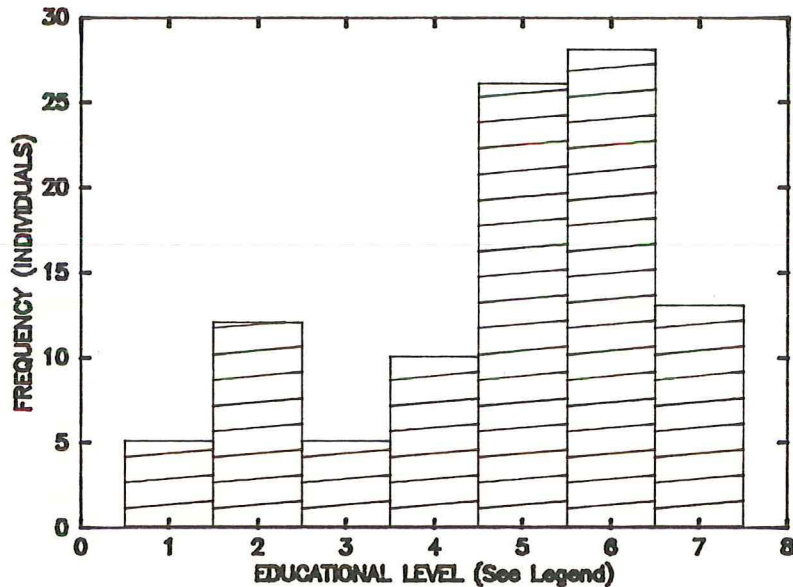
The ages of the 99 males just prior to their radical career change ranged from 23 years to 58 years. The mean age was 36 years (see Fig 3.1).





Educational qualifications of the subjects were extensive. Forty-one men had university degrees, 13 having Masters or Ph.D. degrees (see Fig 3.2).

**Fig 3.2 : (MALES) EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**



Legend Fig 3.2

1. Little secondary education.
2. School Certificate only.
3. University Entrance only.
4. Some university education.
5. Technical qualifications (e.g. Trade or Nursing).
6. Bachelors degree.
7. Masters or Ph.D. degree.

The mean age of those with degrees was no different to that of the rest of the sample.

The vast majority of the subjects (84) were living with their wives prior to their change. There was little variation in their marital situation three years after their career change. Only 15 subjects had altered their marital status. Further, the majority (68) had dependent children, and this was virtually unaltered after the change. Seventy-five percent of subjects expected to have the responsibility of dependent children for over five years. A further 9% expected this for one to five years, whereas only 17% expected to have dependent children for zero to one year.

Most of the subjects rated themselves healthy before the change. Eighty-five rated health good or excellent, a further 12 fair, and 2 individuals considered their health poor. Nonetheless, there was a significant improvement in the subjects' rating of health after the change. (McNemar test  $\chi^2(N = 89) = 13.22$ , 2-tailed  $p = .016$ ). Only two subjects rated their health after the change as either fair or poor. For example, an ex teacher commented on his health prior to the change:

"[I was] pretty unhappily unhealthy after 10 years or so of teaching".

Likewise an ex media personality:

"I didn't want to kill myself".

There was no relationship between age of the subject and his satisfaction with his current health.

The male sample was found to include several occupational sub-groups. Twenty-five of the subjects were ex school teachers. Twenty-six of the subjects are now producing arts or crafts for a living, seventeen of whom are potters.

A shift of residence corresponded with career change for 64 of the subjects. Only 14 were known not to have shifted. For 21 of the subjects, the occurrence or not of a residential shift was not ascertained. For 53% of the subjects shifting meant a new district. For instance, an ex craft teacher stated:

"I couldn't have done this in Auckland".

For 13% of subjects, a shift meant a new country through migration to New Zealand. Whereas 6 subjects had moved into an urban environment, 26 had shifted to a rural location. An ex sales manager reflected:

"Apart from a purely job change, it's a total lifestyle change".

### 3.3 CAREER

#### 3.3.1 Involvement

About one half (47%) of the subjects had no specific career ambitions during their youth. One half of the subjects with specific youthful career ambitions pursued these in their initial career. Only six subjects left initial careers for ones which related to their youthful ambitions.

The majority of subjects (61%) saw their initial career choice as their own decision. A number also referred to opportunity or parental influence as significant factors in their decision. Most of the subjects took their initial career very seriously. For example an ex financier said:

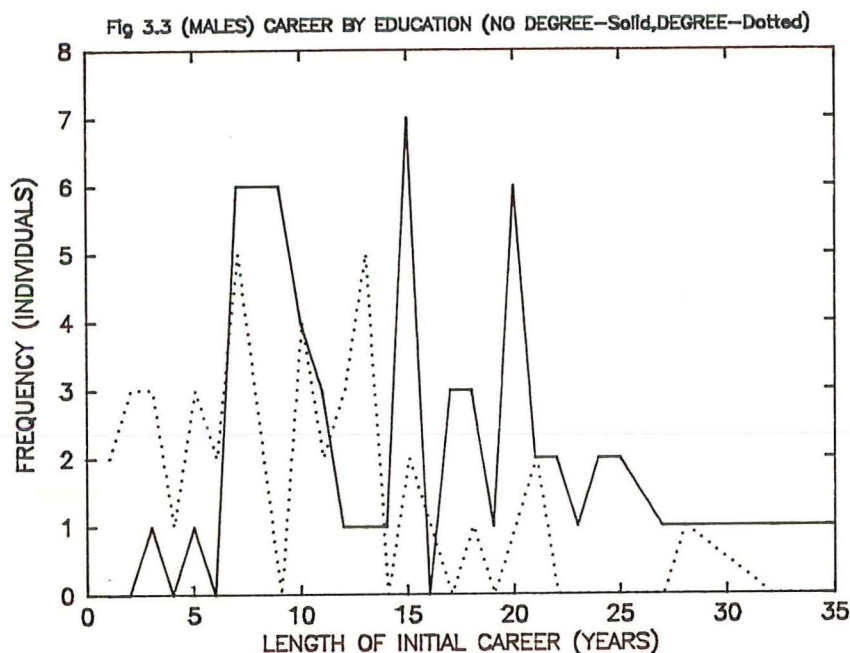
"I started off being terribly ambitious . . .  
I was the youngest branch manager . . ."

Twenty-four subjects had spent 20 years or more in their initial career. For the total sample the mean number of years was 13.5. The seven subjects who expressed dissatisfaction with their health after their change had only spent an average of 8 years in their initial career.

There was a big difference between the mean numbers of years of initial career for subjects with different educational backgrounds. The 41 subjects who had university degrees had spent an average of 10 years in their initial career. This was significantly less than the rest of the sample for whom the average was 16 years ( $F(1,97) = 19.48$ ,  $p = .000$ ) (see Fig 3.3). The 25 ex school teachers as a group had spent an average of 10 years in that career, which was significantly fewer than the average number of years the rest of the sample had spent in their initial careers ( $F(1,97) = 6.20$ ,  $p = .014$ ).

Before the change twenty-four percent of the subjects had been working a 40 hour week, although the average of the male sample was 44.3 hours. A further 20% of the subjects had been working 50 hours or more. There was a significant increase in the mean number of hours worked per week after the change (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 89) = -2.38$ , 2-tailed  $p = .017$ ). The mean moved from 44 hours to 48 hours per week.





Likewise, there was a significant decrease in weeks of annual holiday taken (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 92) = -2.59$ , 2-tailed  $p = .010$ ). The mean number of weeks dropped from 5.4 to 4.9 weeks. Whereas 50% of the men had spouses or de facto relationship partners who worked before the change, this increased significantly to 75% after the change (McNemar test.  $\chi^2(N = 89) = 13.26$ , 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ).

Only 25% of the subjects mentioned that they had some regrets about the way the working aspect of their lives had developed. A majority of the subjects (66%) still regarded a career as a central part of their lives.

### 3.3.2 Satisfactions

Thirty-five percent of subjects had desired their current occupation for a number of years prior to change. Most of these males (64%) felt that they had been boxed in, in a rut, or both, within their initial career. For example an ex financier stated:

"I felt I was getting locked in".

There is some evidence to suggest that these subjects were younger than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,91) = 3.83$ ,  $p = .054$ ).

Whereas 30% of the subjects regarded their health before the change as deteriorating due to their career, the group diminished significantly to 6% after the change (McNemar test.  $\chi^2(N = 95) = 16.69$ , 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ). This 6% group had been working an average of 48 hours per week in their initial career. This was significantly longer than the average of 43 hours per week for the rest of the sample. ( $F(1,92) = 6.40$ ,  $p = .013$ ).

Sixty subjects expressed some satisfaction with their initial career. The remaining 39 had spent significantly fewer years (10.6) in their initial career ( $F(1,86) = 6.62$ ,  $p = .012$ ). In terms of perceived success of the change, 73% of the sample assessed the career change as providing the things they had expected. A further 20% saw the change as fulfilling some of their expectations.

One quarter (24%) of the sample missed nothing from their initial career. One third (34%) missed social aspects, and a smaller group (18%) missed money. The majority though, did make some complaints about their former work. For instance an ex factory manager commented:

"a lot of responsibility, but little authority".

An ex insurance executive also commented:

"[I was] being overloaded to an extent that if I'd carried on, I don't think I'd have lasted the distance".

An ex sales coordinator used these words:

"You get to the stage when you find that what you are contributing to a job, and what you seem to be getting out of it, are all out of kilter".

Most of the subjects mentioned that they now made less distinction between work and leisure. Most are now self employed and so have freedom in scheduling their time off.

### 3.3.3 Income

The average income of the male sample dropped significantly after the change. (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 97) =$



-3.78, 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ). The estimated drop was 20%, which in real terms is likely to have been larger, as incomes were not adjusted for inflation. The subjects who had spent over 10 years in their initial occupation (58%) had been earning significantly more than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 7.42, p = .008$ ). Ex teachers as a group had also been earning significantly less than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 6.16, p = .015$ ). Those subjects who are now producing arts or crafts for a living had also been earning significantly less before career change than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 12.13, p = .001$ ). This was also true for the potters within this group ( $F(1,95) = 6.25, p = .014$ ). University graduates had been earning a similar average income to non-graduates prior to change.

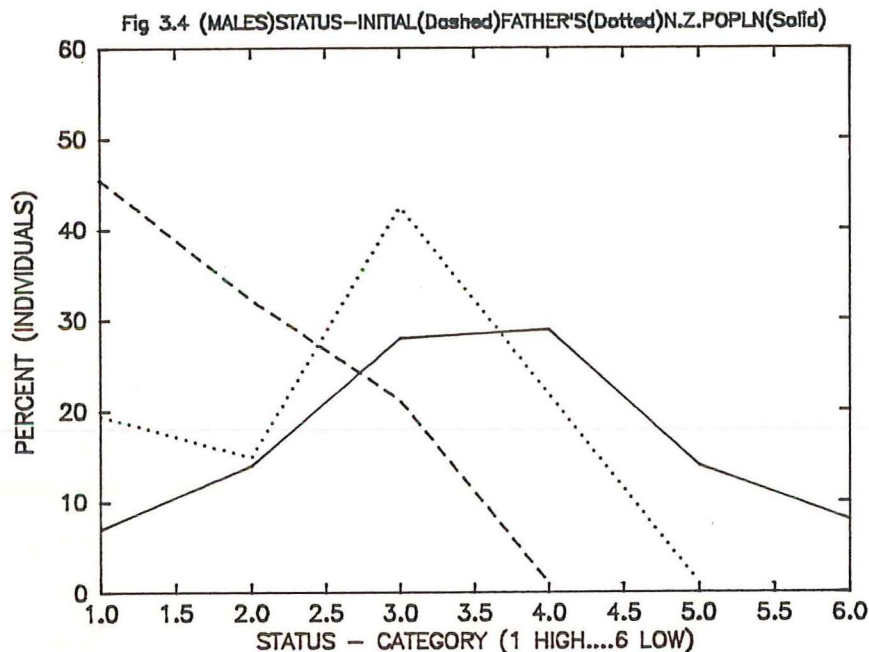
Over half of the males (63%) stated that their contribution accounted for between 80% and 100% of the total financial resources of their household. This group dropped to 53% after the change. Responses in the lower percentage categories changed more markedly and overall a significant decrease was noted (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 97) = -3.68$ , 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ).

#### 3.3.4 Status

Status as measured using the New Zealand socio-economic indices (Johnston, 1983) yielded ratings from 1 (high) to 6 (low) for subjects. There was a significant positive association between subjects' youthful career ambitions and the status of their initial career (Kendalls tau ( $N = 49$ ) = .275,  $p = .029$ ). Average status for the sample was within the top 12% for New Zealand norms. The socio-economic status of the subjects' fathers also tended to be above the New Zealand average (see Fig 3.4).

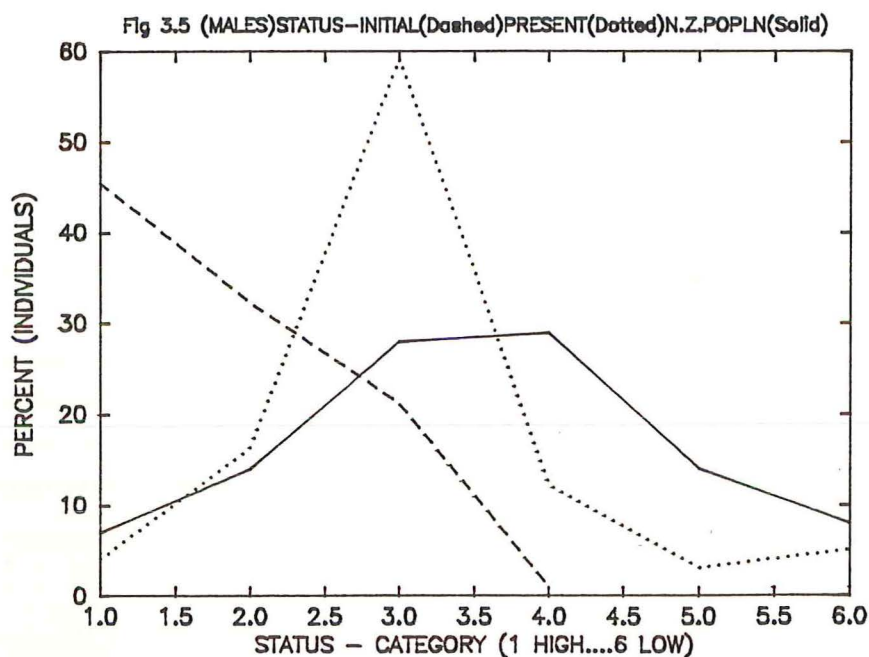
Subjects with higher status initial careers (i.e. category 1 or 2) had been working significantly fewer hours on average than those of lower status initial career ( $F(1,95) = 6.49, p = .013$ ). The data showed a significant positive association between status of initial occupation, and the weeks of annual holiday taken. Even when ex school teachers were removed from the sample this was so (Kendalls





tau ( $N = 74$ ) = .184,  $p = .050$ ). Subjects with high status initial careers had been taking significantly longer annual leave before the change, than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,97) = 9.64$ ,  $p = .003$ ).

Status of initial career was found to be associated with status after the change (Kendalls tau ( $N = 98$ ) = .204,  $p = .020$ ). However, notwithstanding this association, status decreased significantly (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 98) = -6.90$ , 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ). It increased through the change for only three subjects. The mean drop was 1.3 categories! Socio-economic status for most subjects after the change was still clustered at the higher end of the New Zealand population (see Fig 3.5).



### 3.4 CHANGES

#### 3.4.1 General

Career change was a radical step for most of the sample. An ex agricultural contractor commented:

"my whole life changed . . . [most of] my friends changed . . . my marriage changed . . . my relationship with my children even changed".

The major restraints from change were seen as financial ones, and the responsibilities of having dependents.

Fifteen subjects took between 1 and 6 months after first seriously considering career changes, to implement them. A further seventeen took between 6 and 12 months. The majority of subjects (51) took between 1 and 6 years for their decision and implementation time. An ex graphic designer made the comment:

"A decision was made over a few months . . . career or lifestyle".

After the change 54 subjects began earning their livelihood from a previous hobby, or from an occupation which they had some experience in. Further, 33 of the subjects had acquired extra education or training just prior to or after the change. Nineteen considered it necessary for their change.

More than half (51) of the subjects believed their career change reversible. Thirty-one subjects felt that acquaintances who had previously undergone career changes were a significant encouragement or model for their change.

The following forms of social conditions had been contemplated:

- : the present government
- : freedom and democracy
- : state of law and order
- : moral standards and values
- : New Zealand's reputation in the world.

The majority of subjects emphasized dissatisfaction with all these aspects of New Zealand society and life. Strongest dissatisfaction was expressed about "the present government" which was the Muldoon National Party Government. The data were collected just prior to the 1984 snap election (see Fig 3.14 p.54).

#### 3.4.2 Motives

Many subjects had motives for change in common. For example:

"When I started off . . . I was prepared to get in and work very hard at it . . . But then, when you have a family, things change a little and you need more time with your family . . ."

(an ex management accountant).

"You start to say, what the hell is important in life . . . I was never at home. I was always travelling and the golden dollar wasn't so important to me any longer" (an ex financier).



"I was sure that there were new and different things in the world" (an ex personnel executive).

"[I wanted] to do my own thing, to do what I want to do, when I want to do it" (an ex tradesman).

Subjects had been asked to acknowledge any of 16 possible motive factors which they considered important in their career change. Half of these factors were positively phrased e.g. "Improving your finances". The bulk of the remainder were negatively phrased e.g. "The frustrations of working in an organization". The other factors were neutral in phrasing, and may have been viewed either positively or negatively depending on their association for the subjects e.g. "The opinions of colleagues and friends". The factor most acknowledged was:

"Increasing your independence" (67 subjects).

Fifty-nine subjects included:

"Better fit of personal values and work".

A similar number (58) included:

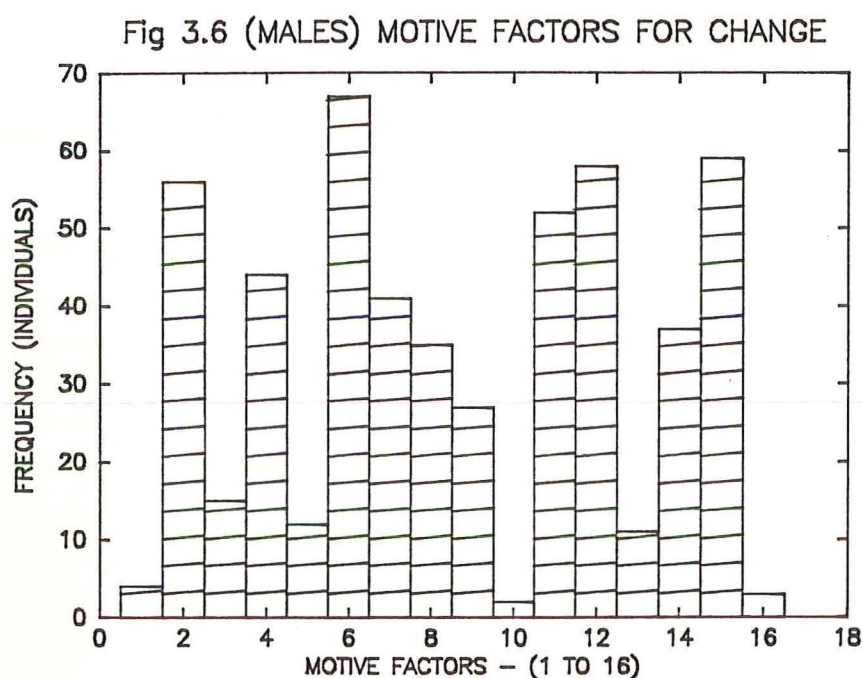
"More meaningful work".

Over half of the sample included two further factors:

"The frustrations of working in an organisation" (56).

"Desire for greater achievement" (52).

(See Fig 3.6).



Legend Fig 3.6

MOTIVE FACTORS

1. The opinions of colleagues and friends
2. The frustrations of working in an organization
3. Improving your finances
4. Getting away from the pressures of society
5. Increasing your security
6. Increasing your independence
7. To have more time with your family
8. To have more time for recreation
9. Safeguard one's health
10. Avoid being made redundant
11. Desire for greater achievement
12. More meaningful work
13. The overall opinion of members of your family
14. To be able to live in a better locality
15. Better fit of personal values and work
16. Influence of your, or your spouse's parents

The subjects had ranked the five factors they considered most important in order of importance. A number of subjects had not chosen more than three factors, so that there were increasing numbers of missing cases for the fourth and fifth ranked factors (see Table 3.1 and Fig 3.7).

Table 3.1 (Males) Motive Factors (Strongest 5)  
- Percentage (Individuals)

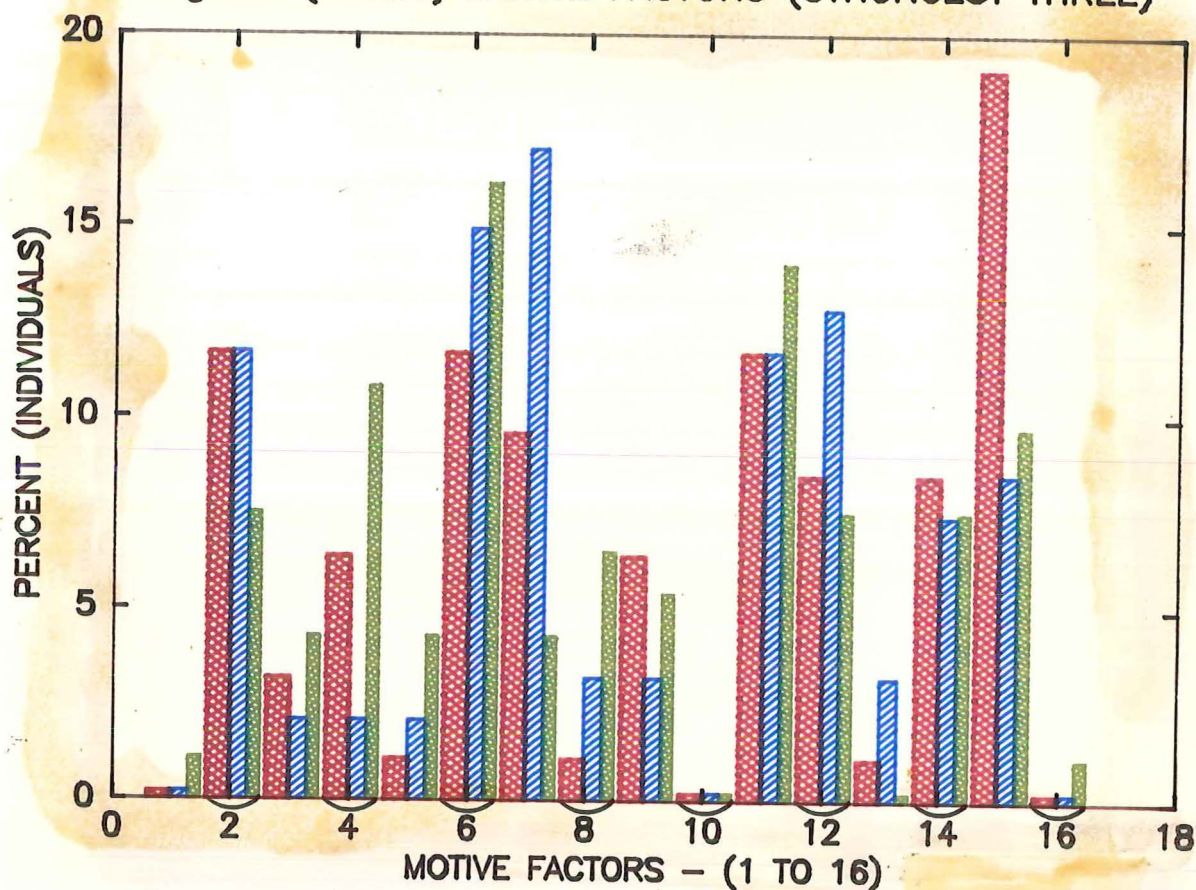
MOTIVE FACTORS	RANKING OF MOTIVE				
	PRIME	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH
1. The opinions of colleagues and friends	-	-	1.0	2.0	-
2. The frustrations of working in an organization	11.1	11.2	7.1	9.1	6.1
3. Improving your finances	3.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	1.0
4. Getting away from the pressures of society	6.1	2.0	10.1	9.1	8.1
5. Increasing your security	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	2.0
6. Increasing your independence	11.1	14.1	15.2	11.1	9.1
7. To have more time with your family	9.1	16.2	4.0	6.1	2.0
8. To have more time for recreation	1.0	3.0	6.1	4.0	9.1
9. Safeguard one's health	6.1	3.0	5.1	7.1	1.0
10. Avoid being made redundant	-	-	-	-	1.0
11. Desire for greater achievement	11.1	11.1	13.1	8.1	3.0
12. More meaningful work	8.1	12.1	7.1	11.1	10.1
13. The overall opinion of members of your family.	1.0	3.0	-	2.0	3.0
14. To be able to live in a better locality	8.1	7.1	7.1	5.1	4.0
15. Better fit of personal values and work	18.2	8.1	9.1	8.1	7.1
16. Influence of your, or your spouse's parents	-	-	1.0	2.0	-
COLUMN TOTALS	94.9	94.9	93.9	86.9	66.6

"Better fit of personal values and work" emerged as the most often selected prime motive for change. "To have more time with your family" was most often selected as the second motive. The most often included third motive was "Increasing your independence".

There was some correspondence between the most often chosen factors for consideration and those which were ranked as most important. Because a factor may have been included for consideration by a subject is not to say that it assumed



Fig 3.7 (MALES) MOTIVE FACTORS (STRONGEST THREE)



Key	Red = PRIME motive
	Blue = Second motive
	Green = Third motive

any priority or relative significance in the career change decision. Before commenting on overall significance, one must examine how often a factor was included, and examine how many subjects gave this factor priority.

Subjects who included "Better fit of values and work" as a consideration tended to be younger than other subjects at the time of career change. Their average age was 34 years as compared with 38 years average for the rest of the sample ( $F(1,97) = 5.26, p = .024$ ). Those subjects who included "More meaningful work" as a factor tended to be younger than the rest of the sample (Kendalls tau ( $N = 99$ ) =  $-.191, p = .044$ ). They had been working fewer hours per week ( $M = 42$  hours) than the rest of the sample ( $M = 47$

hours) ( $F(1,95) = 7.47, p = .008$ ). They had also been taking more weeks holiday per year ( $M = 6$  weeks) compared with the rest of the sample ( $M = 4$  weeks). Even after removing ex teachers, similar results were found. An association for hours worked (Kendalls tau ( $N = 72$ ) =  $-.235, p = .027$ ), and an association for annual holidays (Kendalls tau ( $N = 74$ ) =  $.245, p = .022$ ).

Those subjects including "To have more time with your family" had been working more hours and earning significantly more income than the rest of the sample (Hours:  $F(1,95) = 4.29, p = .041$ . Income:  $F(1,95) = 7.56, p = .007$ ). They were working similar hours to other subjects after the change. Subjects acknowledging "To have more time for recreation" as well as those including "Safeguard one's health" had likewise been working significantly greater hours than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 3.93, p = .050$ ). The subjects noting "The frustrations of working in an organization" on the other hand, had been working significantly fewer hours than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 4.58, p = .035$ ). "Desire for greater achievement" was mentioned by those subjects earning less income than the rest of the sample ( $F(1,95) = 10.71, p = .002$ ).

Subjects including "More meaningful work" as an important motive for career change, tended also to include "Better fit of personal values and work". Those who excluded one, tended to exclude the other (Kendalls tau ( $N = 99$ ) =  $.311, p = .001$ ). Subjects who included "Desire for greater achievement" tended to disregard "To have more time for recreation". Those including one, tended to exclude the other (Kendalls tau ( $N = 99$ ) =  $-.228, p = .012$ ).

Considerable variation was observed in the prime motive chosen by subjects with initial careers of different lengths. Subjects who had stayed within their initial careers for over 13 years tended to choose one of the following factors as the most important one:

"Increasing your independence"

"To have more time with your family"



"The frustrations of working in an organisation"

"To be able to live in a better locality"

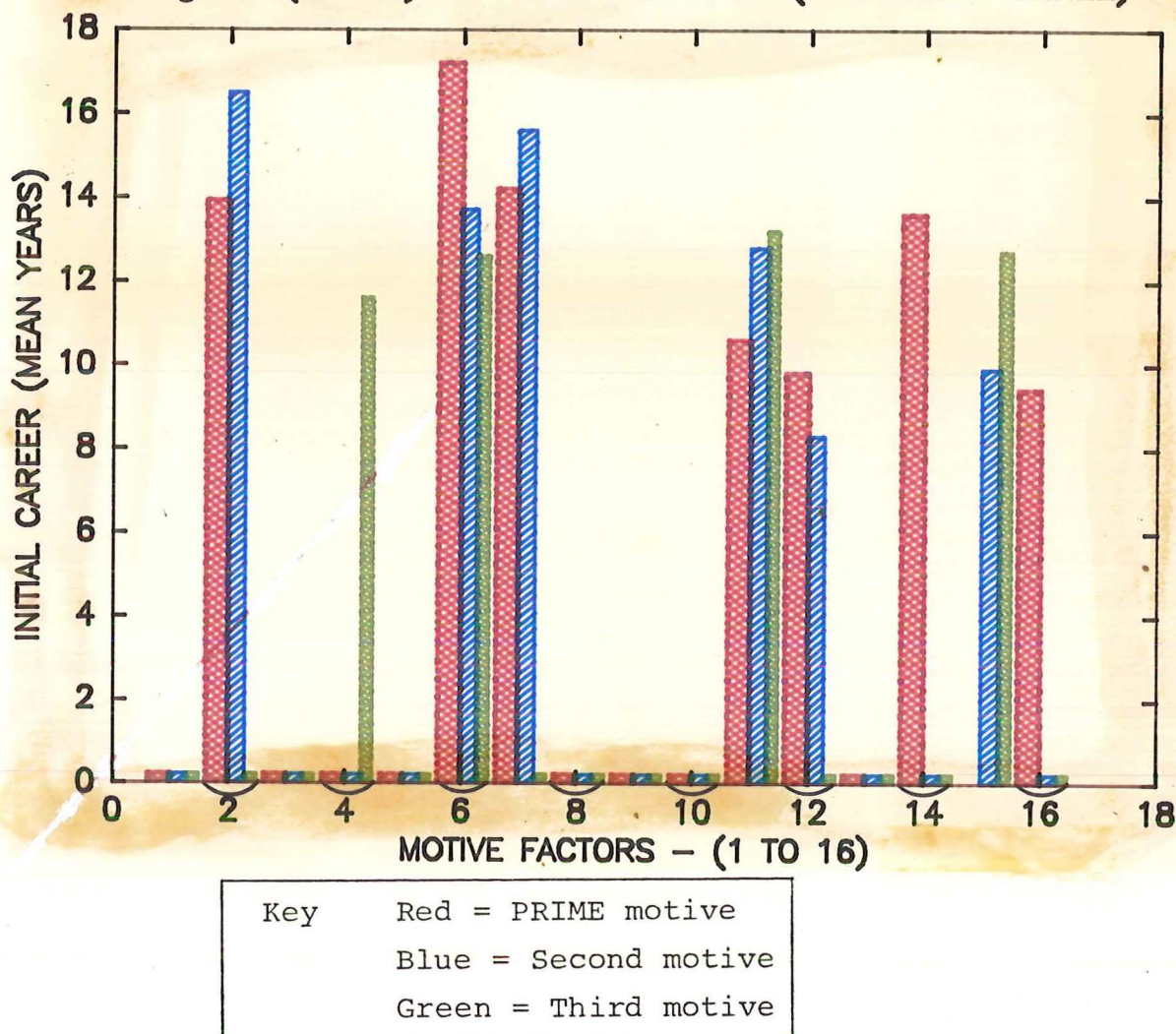
Those subjects with under 10 years in their initial career tended to choose other factors, particularly the following two:

"Better fit of personal values and work"

"More meaningful work"

Second and third ranked motives also differed for subjects with different average lengths of initial career (see Fig 3.8).

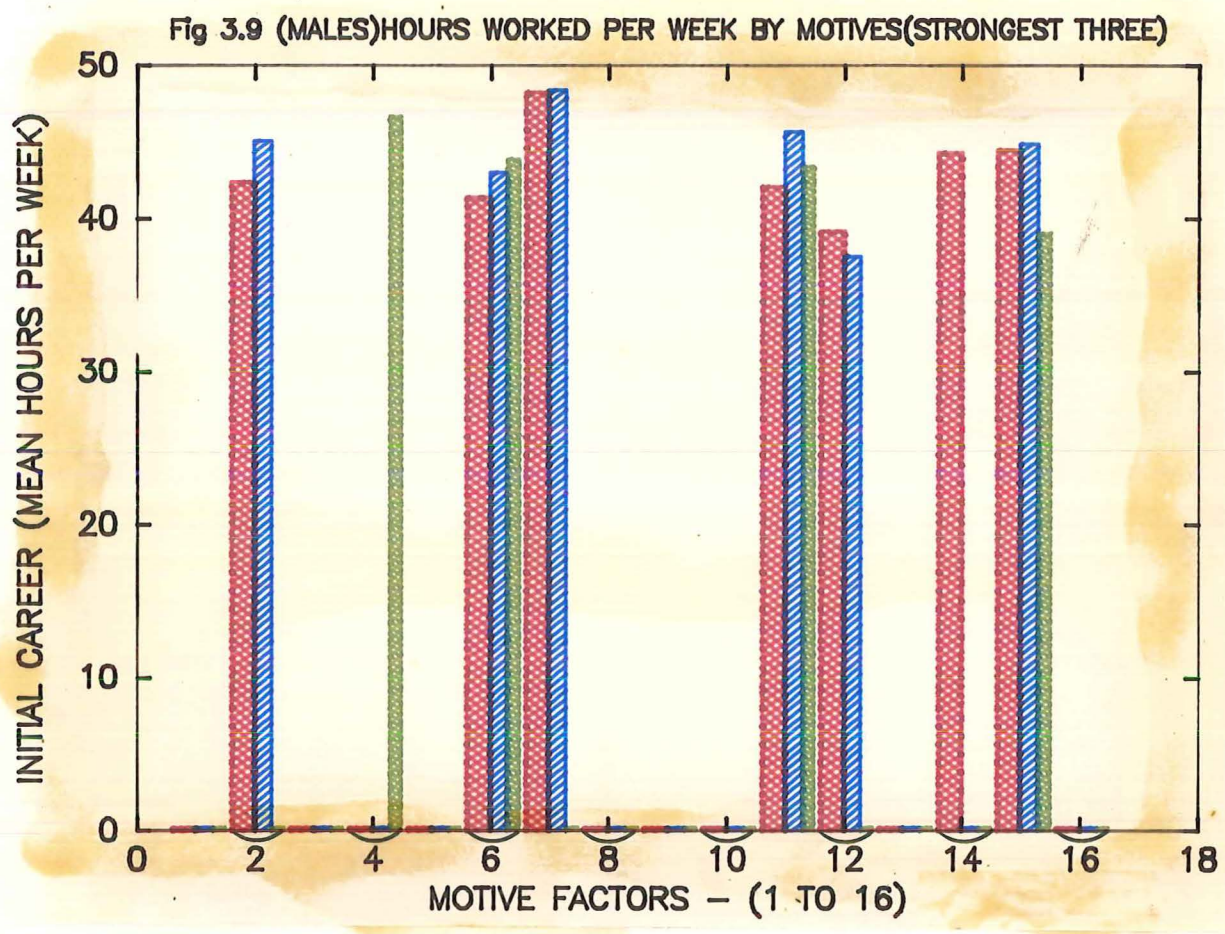
**Fig 3.8 (MALES) CAREER BY MOTIVES (STRONGEST THREE)**



(NOTE: Bars were plotted only when  $N > 7$ )

Different prime, second and third ranked motives were chosen by subjects who had been working different average hours per week (see Fig 3.9). This same phenomenon

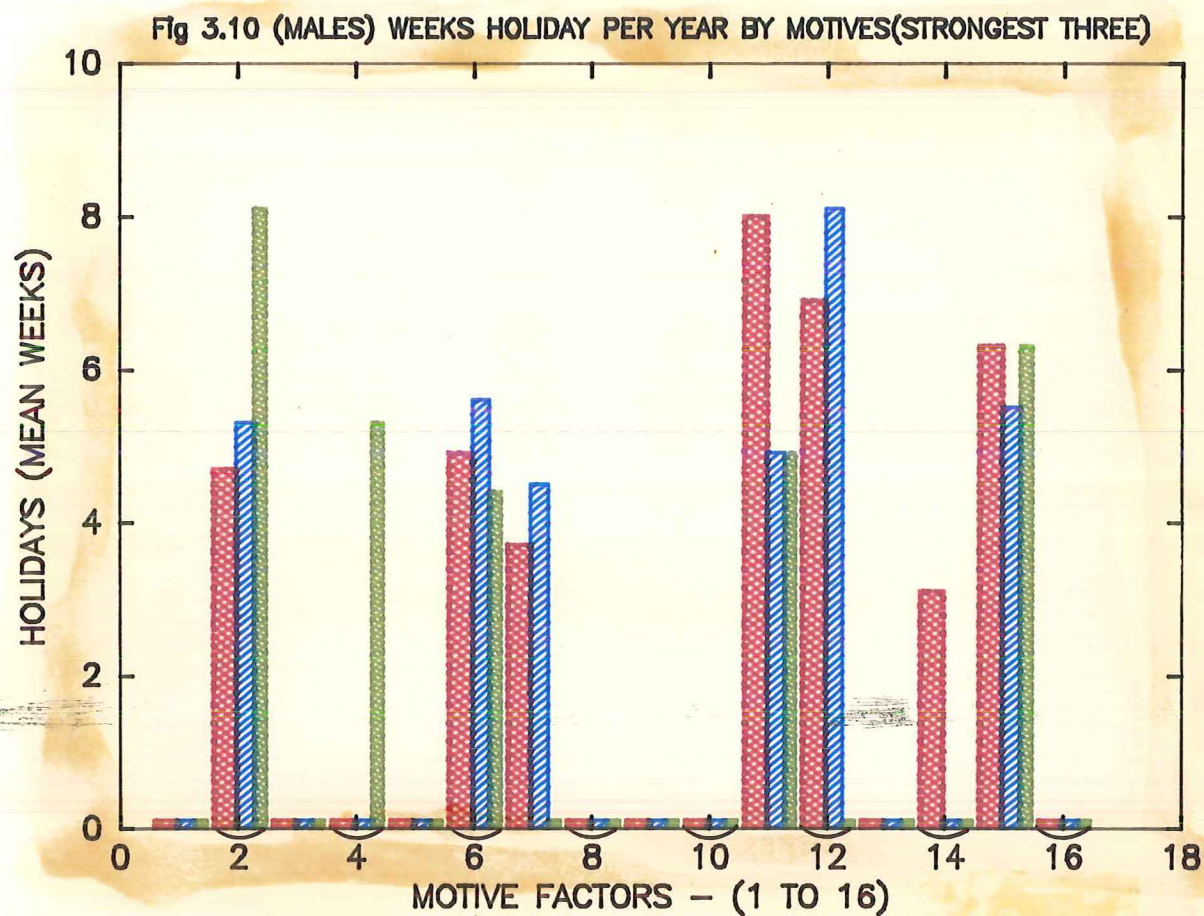




Note: Bars were plotted only when  $\underline{N} > 7$

Key	Red = PRIME motive
	Blue = Second motive
	Green = Third motive

was even more obvious for subjects who had been earning different average incomes and having different lengths of annual holiday (see Fig 3.10 and Fig 3.11).

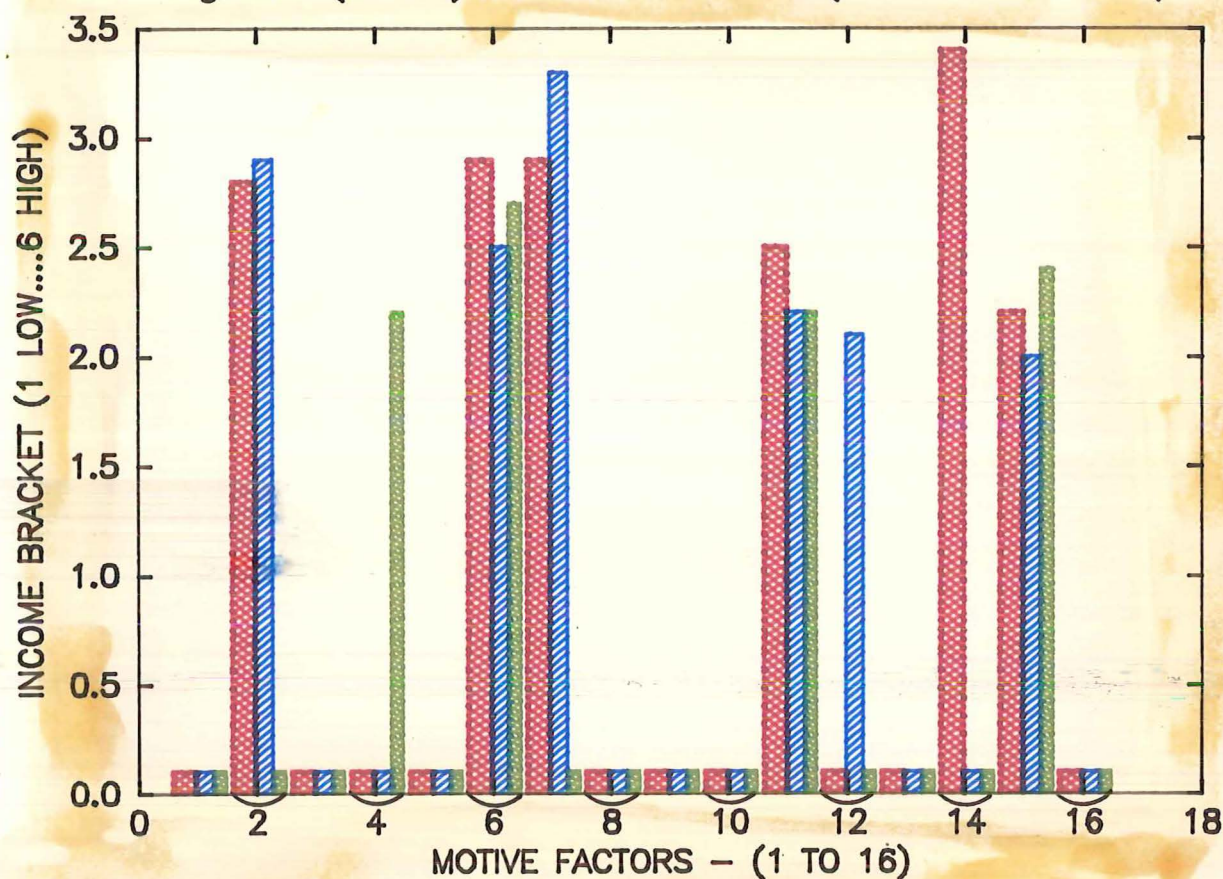


Note: Bars were plotted only when  $N > 7$

Key	Red = PRIME motive
	Blue = Second motive
	Green = Third motive



Fig 3.11 (MALES) INCOME BY MOTIVES(STRONGEST THREE)



NOTE: Bars were plotted only when  $N > 7$ .

Key	Red = PRIME motive
	Blue = Second motive
	Green = Third motive

#### 3.4.3 Pressure for change

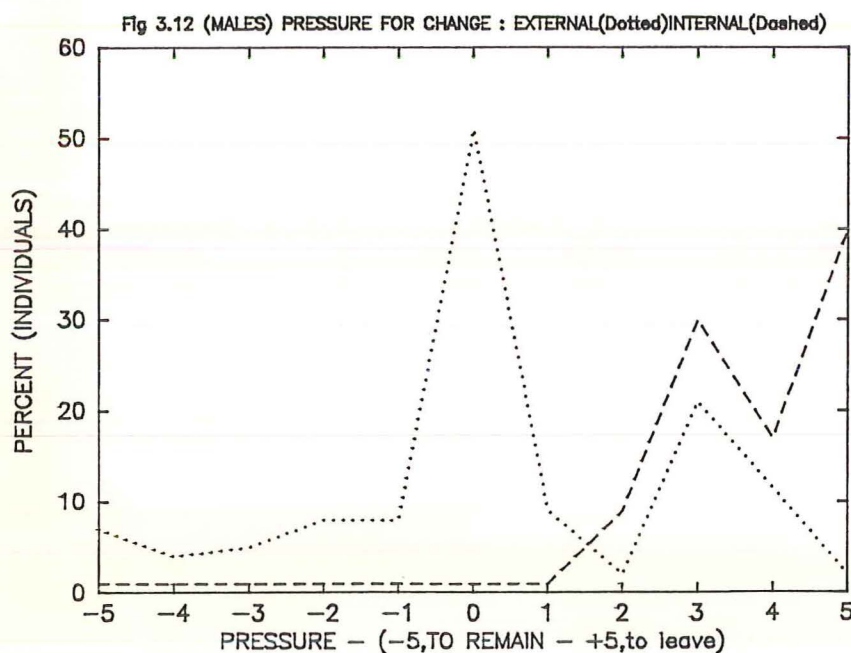
Sources of pressure for career change varied. An ex-accountant stated:

"... relations thought I was quite mad ... but then they didn't understand the nitty-gritty of the stresses within the job ... It's easy to view from a distance and not know the facts".

Subjects rated both external pressure and personal desire to leave initial career. Possible responses on each



variable ranged from -5 to +5. The actual distribution of responses was not wide. Over half of the subjects rated external pressure as zero. Only three subjects rated their personal desire for career change less than +2 (see Fig 3.12).



Subjects had been asked whether they changed their career more for the reason that they disliked their initial one, or because they desired their alternative occupation. This question will be referred to as "push or pull". Seventy-two percent of the subjects changed more for the desire of their alternative occupation i.e. were pulled.

Those subjects who had regarded their health as deteriorating due to their initial career appear to be those who were "pushed" from their initial career (Kendalls tau ( $N = 94$ ) = .204,  $p = .025$ ). In relation to this, subjects who stated that they were pushed tended to include "safeguard one's health" as a factor for change ( $X^2(1, N = 97) = 4.75$ ,  $p = .029$ .  $C = .240$ ).

There was a strong association between the subjects' job satisfaction in their initial careers, and push or pull.

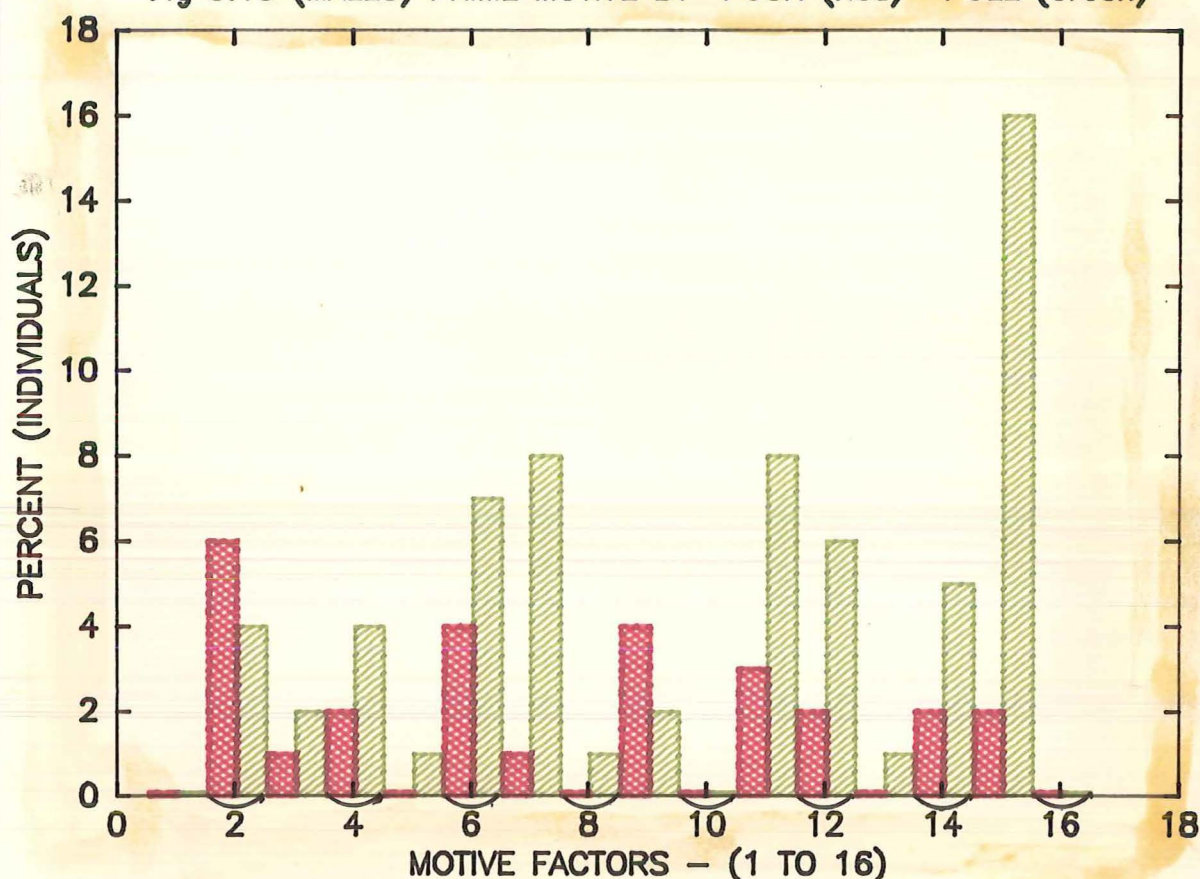
Those subjects expressing low job satisfaction tended to have been pushed from their initial career ( $\chi^2(3, N = 97) = 35.82, p = .000, C = .519$ ). Subjects pushed from their initial careers tended also to express less job satisfaction after the change (Kendalls tau ( $N = 96$ ) =  $-.143, p = .042$ ). This is further corroborated by findings relating to current well-being (described in Section 3.5.1).

More of the pushed group regarded their decision as irreversible ( $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.00, p = .045, C = .221$ ), and did not consider career highly important ( $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 9.93, p = .002, C = .329$ ). More subjects from this pushed group included "getting away from the pressures of society" as a factor for change ( $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 3.75, p = .053, C = .215$ ).

Subjects in the pulled group acknowledged other motive factors for change than those chosen by subjects in the pushed group. Almost invariably, more pushed subjects chose negatively phrased factors, whereas pulled subjects tended to choose the positively phrased factors. "Better fit of personal values and work" emerged as the prime motive for the largest number of pulled subjects. "The frustrations of working in an organization" transpired as the most often included prime motive for those who were pushed from their initial career (see Fig 3.13).

There was virtually no relationship between status of initial career, and whether subjects had been pushed or pulled from their initial careers. However, subjects who were pulled to change, tended to be going to higher status occupations than those who were pushed (Kendalls tau ( $N = 96$ ) =  $-.143, p = .042$ ). What this means, is that subjects who were pulled from their initial careers did not lose as much status through their change as subjects who were pushed.

Fig 3.13 (MALES) PRIME MOTIVE BY "PUSH"(Red)–"PULL"(Green)



### 3.5 PRESENT AND FUTURE

#### 3.5.1 Well-being

Career change had critical implications for subsequent happiness. An ex mental health professional reflected:

"I could've hung in and adapted to the situation, knowing full well that I wouldn't have been as rounded, as fulfilled as I feel at the moment".

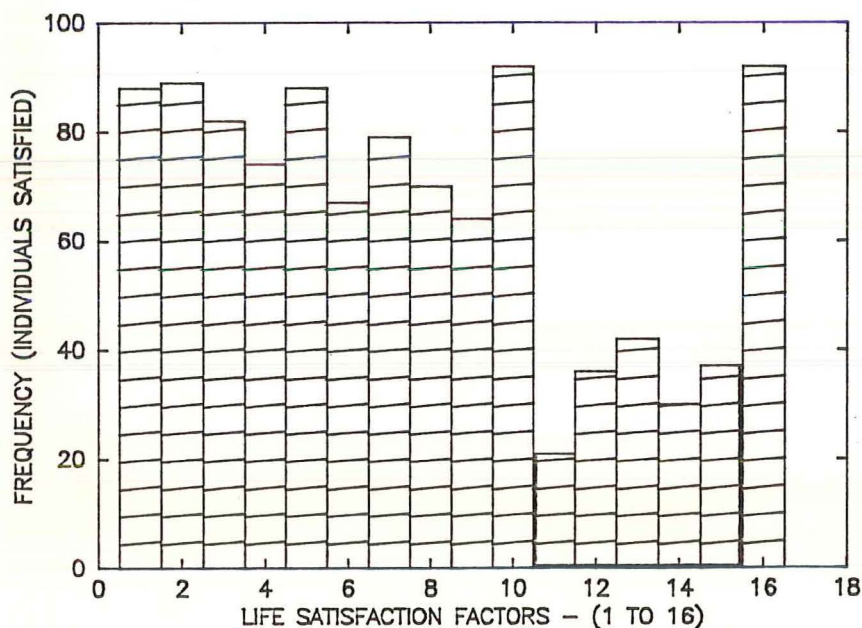
An ex managing director commented likewise:

"My whole view of life is far broader now that I'm out of the business".



Subjects generally expressed satisfaction about most aspects of their life. The least satisfaction was noted for "your social life" and "the education you have received". This is with the exception of the five factors relating to New Zealand society (Factors 11 - 15, discussed in Section 3.4.1, p.41) (see Fig 3.14).

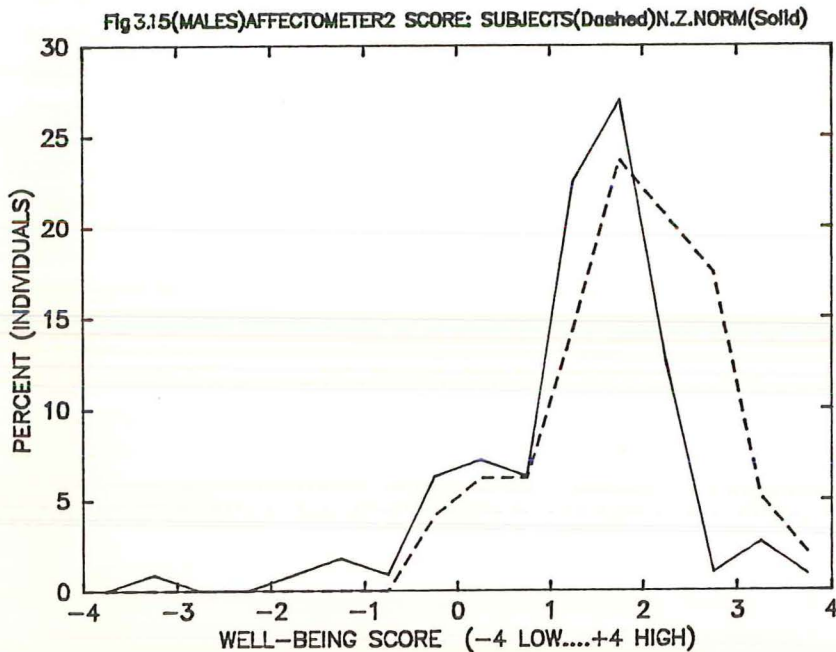
Fig 3.14 (MALES) LIFE SATISFACTIONS



LIFE SATISFACTION FACTORS

1. The house or flat that you live in
2. The local district that you live in
3. Your standard of living: the things you can buy and do
4. The way you spend your leisure time
5. Your present state of health
6. The education you have received
7. What you are accomplishing in life
8. What the future seems to hold for you
9. Your social life
10. Your family life
11. The present government
12. Freedom and democracy in N.Z. today
13. The state of law and order in N.Z. today
14. The moral standards and values in N.Z. today
15. N.Z.'s reputation in the world today
16. Taking everything together, your life as a whole these days

Scores of well-being for the males as measured by Affectometer 2, were higher ( $\bar{M} = 1.86$ ) than those of the New Zealand normative sample ( $\bar{M} = 1.43$ ) ( $t(209) = 17.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ), (see Fig 3.15).



Evidence illustrated a significant difference in current well-being between those who were pushed and those who were pulled from their initial career. Subjects who had been pulled had higher average scores on the Affectometer 2 ( $F(1,93) = 4.08$ ,  $p = .046$ ).

The mean score of current well-being for those who rated their health after the change as fair or poor ( $\bar{M} = .96$ ), was significantly lower than for subjects who considered their health good or excellent ( $\bar{M} = 1.90$ ), ( $F(1,95) = 4.48$ ,  $p = .037$ ). There was virtually no difference in the well-being score of those expressing different levels of job satisfaction about their new work. Age and educational background were likewise unrelated to scores of well-being. There was a significant association between subjects' satisfaction with "taking everything together, your life as a whole these days" and their score of well-being (Kendalls tau ( $N = 91$ ) = .34,  $p = .000$ ).

### 3.5.2 Plans

Subjects were asked if they would make any changes from their current occupation, if by good fortune it became unnecessary for them to work, i.e. they became financially independent. For some subjects this was already the case. Seventy-nine percent of subjects considered that they would make little change in this aspect of their lives. Twenty-six of the subjects expected to be doing the same type of work five years from now. A further 51 subjects expected to be doing the same work, but with some changes. The remaining 22 subjects expected to be doing something substantially different within five years.

The average well-being score of these three groups differed significantly. Those intending no change, had a higher well-being score than those who intended to make some changes. The subjects intending to make some changes, in turn had a higher average score of well-being than those intending to do something substantially different ( $F(2,92) = 5.10, p = .008$ ). A smaller proportion of those who had "tested" their current work (i.e. present occupation was previously a hobby, or something they had some experience in), intended to make any changes (Kendalls tau ( $N = 96$ ) = .24,  $p = .012$ ).

There was a strong association between whether subjects had been pushed or pulled from their initial career, and their plans. Far fewer subjects who had been pulled intended to make any changes (Kendalls tau ( $N = 95$ ) = -.25,  $p = .005$ ).

Almost all (90%) of the subjects foresaw any "retirement" stage in their lives as having little effect on the type of work they were now doing. The majority did not expect to retire in the traditional sense.

## 3.6 FEMALE SAMPLE

### 3.6.1 Background

The average age of the females just before their change was 36 years, exactly the same as for the male



sample. Educational backgrounds were also similar for subjects from both groups.

Sixty percent of the females were living with a marriage partner just prior to their career change. This was fewer than the 85% observed in the male sample. The female sample tended to retain fewer dependent children in the wake of their change than the male sample. After their change, 58% of the females responded that they expected to have dependent children for between zero and five years. Only 26% of the males responded in this category after the change.

Shift of living location tended to correspond less with career change for females than for males (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 (Males and Females): Changes in Living Locality

	TOTAL	COUNTRY	DISTRICT	URBAN→RURAL	RURAL→URBAN
Female (%)	66.7	5.6	50.0	31.3	6.7
Male (%)	81.8	14.0	65.0	37.1	8.2

Forty-two percent of the females regarded the time since their change, and the time yet to come, as the best years of their life. Twenty-nine percent of males responded this way. Eleven percent of males regarded the time prior to their marriage as the best years of their life. No females responded in this category.

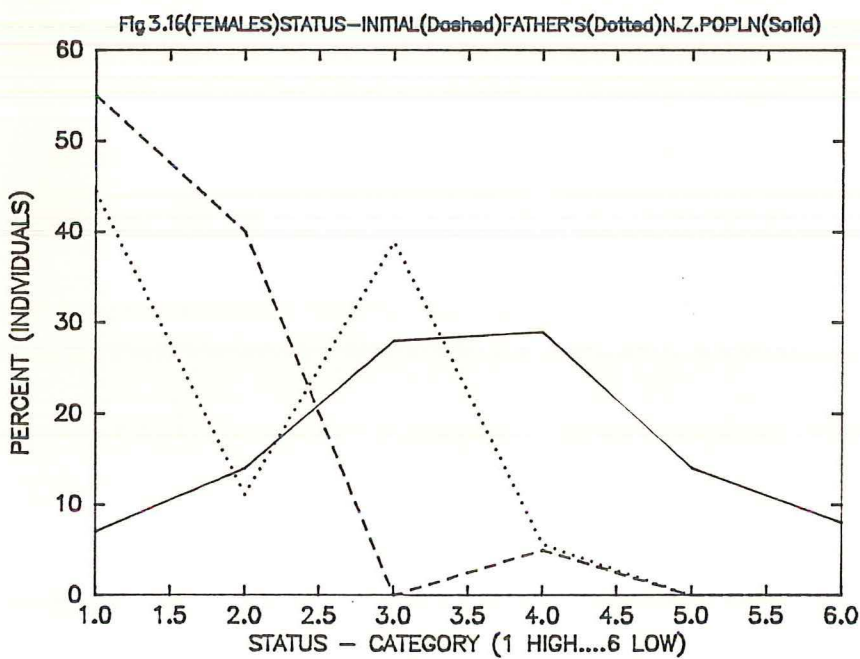
### 3.6.2 Career

Length of initial career was shorter for the female than the male group. They had spent on average, 10.3 years within them, whereas this figure for the male group was 13.4 years.

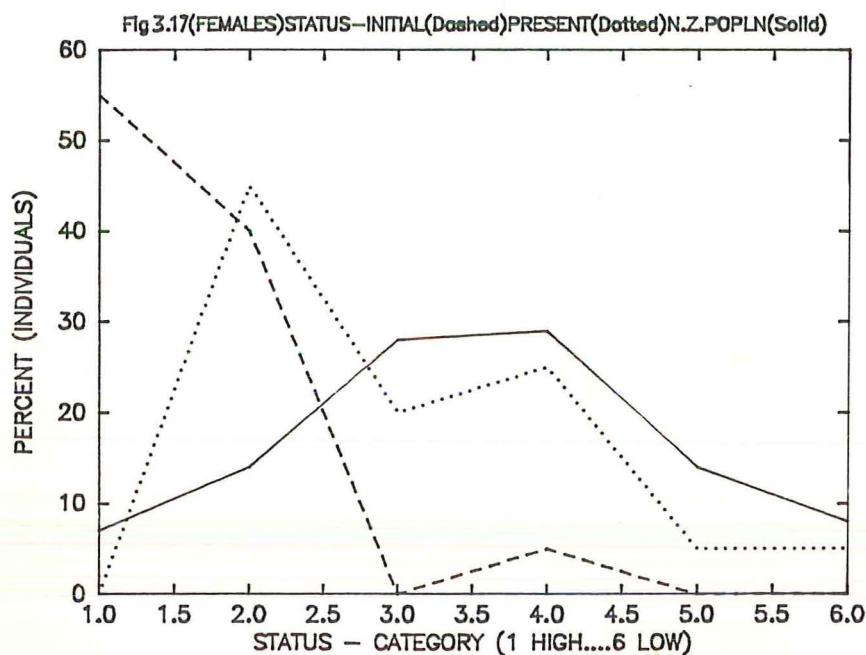
Almost all (94%) of females had stated that their marriage or defacto relationship partners worked before the career change (males: 51%). This figure for females fell from the 94% to 87% after the change. The percentage

of males who responded that their partner was working after the change increased from the 51% to 76%. Both groups expressed the same degree of job satisfaction before the change. Similar percentages of both male and female samples likewise considered that they were boxed in, in a rut, or both.

The female group showed characteristics and trends in relation to status, similar to those of the males. They had relatively high status initial careers. Their fathers also had high status occupations (see Fig 3.16).



The average status of the female subjects decreased significantly through their change (Wilcoxon test.  $Z(N = 20) = -3.52$ , 2-tailed  $p = .000$ ) (see Fig 3.17).



### 3.6.3 Changes

The female subjects took similar lengths of time to males, to implement their career changes. Sixty-seven percent of the female sample had left their initial careers because of desire of the alternatives (i.e. were pulled). The remaining 33% had left because of dislike of their current occupations (i.e. were pushed). Percentages were similar to those of the male sample. There was an association between implementation time and push or pull. Females pulled from their initial career tended to take less time to implement their change (Kendalls tau ( $N = 17$ ) =  $-.35$ ,  $p = .049$ ).

Females acknowledged similar motives for change to males (see Fig 3.18). Paralleling the male sample, the largest number of females included "Increasing your independence" (75%). The next three most often included factors were likewise:

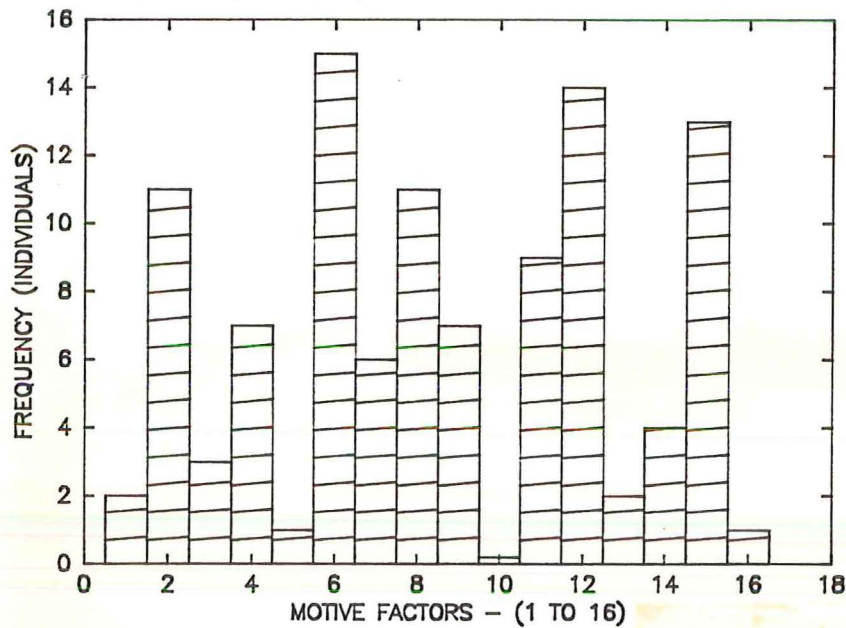
"Better fit of personal values and work",

"More meaningful work",

"The frustrations of working in an organisation".



Fig 3.18 (FEMALES) MOTIVE FACTORS FOR CHANGE



Proportionately less women than men acknowledged:

"Getting away from the pressures of society",

"To have more time with your family",

"Desire for greater achievement",

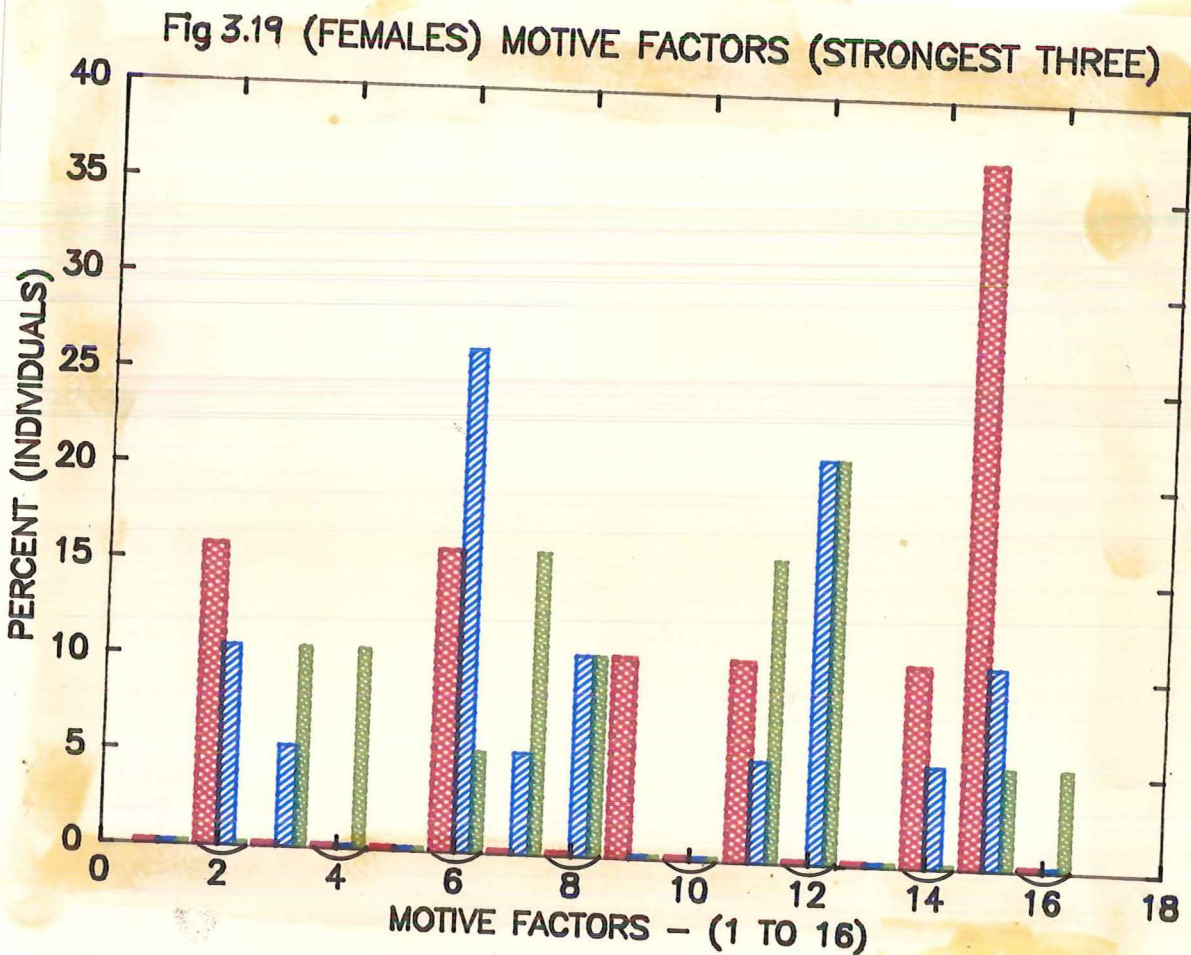
"To be able to live in a better locality".

The female sample included "More time for recreation" proportionately more often than the male sample.

The four females who included "To be able to live in a better locality" were all under the age of 30 years, just prior to their career change. There was a significant association between those including this factor, and age just before change (Kendalls tau ( $N = 20$ ) =  $-.48$ ,  $p = .009$ ). There was an association also, between the females who included "To have more time for recreation" and the length of annual holiday they took after the change. Those females including this factor, subsequently had more holidays than the rest of the sample (Kendalls tau ( $N = 20$ ) =  $.46$ ,  $p = .030$ ).

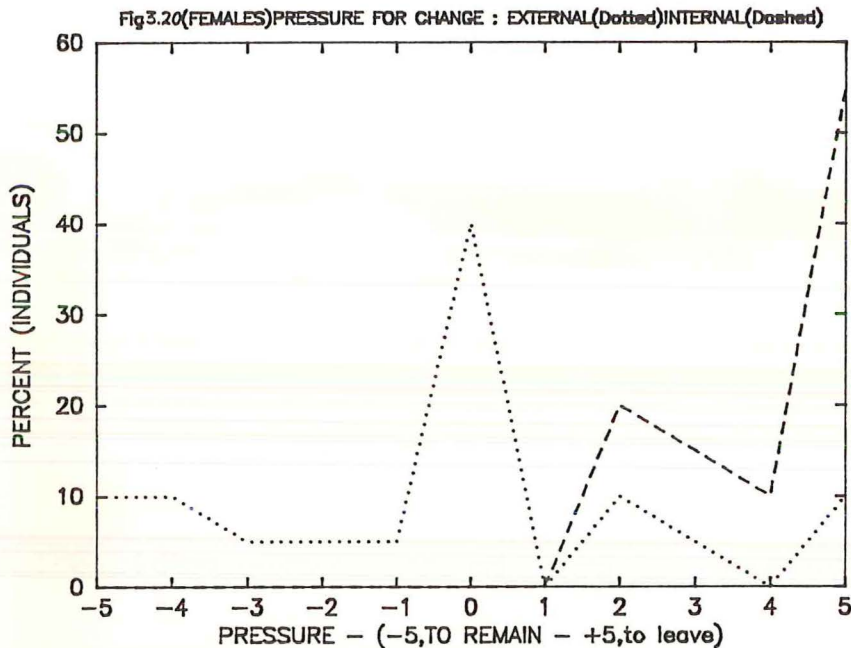
The trends in the different change factors considered were even more noticeable, when females were asked to rank the most significant five factors. Thirty-seven percent of

the female sample chose "Better fit of personal values and work" as their prime motive for change! None chose "To have more time with your family" as the prime motive. "Increasing your independence" was chosen most often as the second motive, and "More meaningful work" as the third most important factor (see Fig 3.19).



Key      Red = PRIME motive  
          Blue = Second motive  
          Green = Third motive

The data from females showed little variation in perceived internal and external pressure for change (see Fig. 3.20).



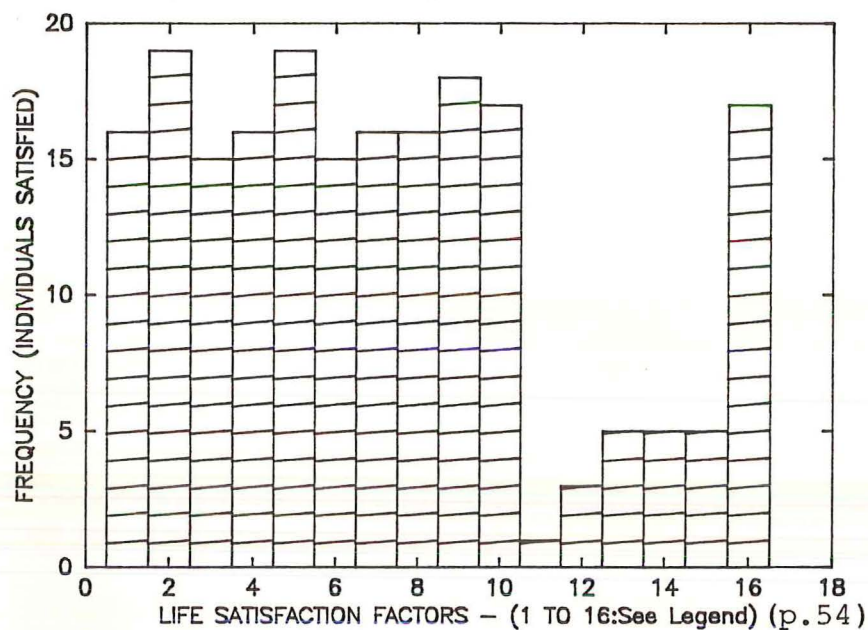
#### 3.6.4 Present and Future

Ninety percent of the female sample considered that the change from their initial career had provided the things they desired. This compared with 73% of males who had responded in this category. Whereas 7% of males considered that the desired differences had not been enabled by the career change, none of the females responded in this way.

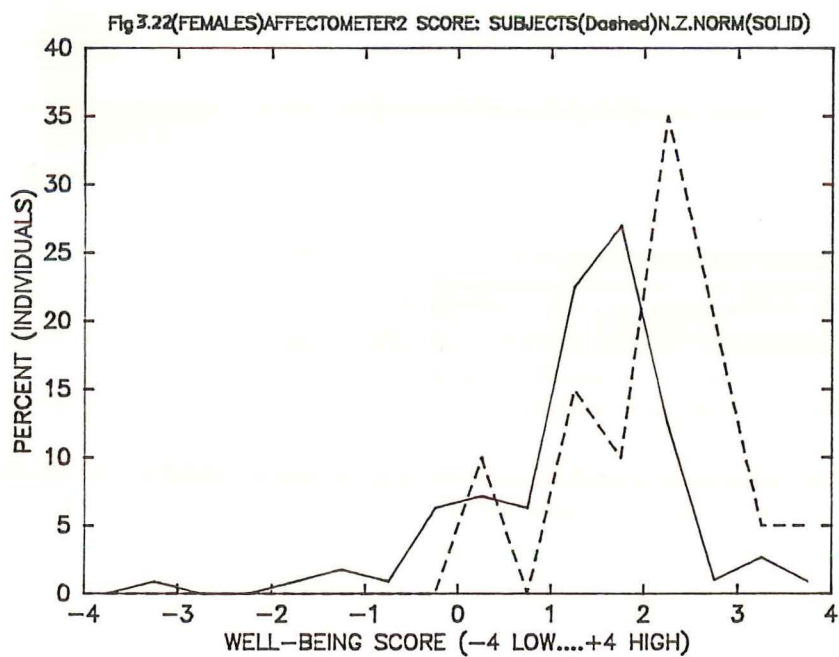
Females' responses to life satisfaction questions were similar to those of the male sample. They showed however, even more dissatisfaction than the males with the five questions relating to New Zealand society (see Fig. 3.21).



Fig 3.21 (FEMALES) LIFE SATISFACTIONS



The mean Affectometer 2 score (well-being) of the female sample was significantly higher than that of the New Zealand normative sample ( $t(130) = 3.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (see Fig 3.22).



Average well-being was not significantly different to that of the male sample.

The female group had less stable work plans than the males. Only 5% of the females intended to be within the same occupation for the next five years. This contrasted with the 26% of the male sample who had responded this way.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## DISCUSSION

The discussion of results will follow a similar pattern to the presentation of results. There will be four sections. The first section examines the findings relating exclusively to the males in the sample. Section two discusses results from the small female sample. Section three describes some of the limitations of this study, and the final section gives a brief summary of the overall findings.

## 4.1 MALES

4.1.1 Environment of Change

Radical career change is plausibly described by one explanation, as a manifestation of mid-life transition. The majority of male subjects in this study changed careers before the age of 36, earlier than most writers would predict mid-life transition (Jung, 1933; Gould, 1978; Sheehy, 1976; Golembiewski, 1978; Levinson, 1978). Even though the ages of the subjects varied considerably, they all had in common a major career change. This selection criterion had the effect of overwhelming variation in other variables which might be expected to vary with age. In other words, subjects were really not so different in terms of any life stage criteria as their different ages might suggest. Age did not prove to be a good basis on which to distinguish groups of career changers.

The reported frequent coincidence of mid-life marriage breakup with career change (Hiestand, 1971; Clopton, 1973), was not observed. Contrary to the findings of Heald (1977), subjects still had numbers of dependent children after the change, and most expected this for over five years yet. Dependent aged parents were considered a restraint from change by very few subjects. These two outcomes support the results of Thomas (1980) who found no unique family characteristics to account for career changes. A few subjects mentioned that they considered elderly parents in



their decision to change from their career. This consideration had had no uniform effect among them. Career change for some subjects enabled their parents to live with them. Other subjects felt it to have been a restraint from change, but were nonetheless now living far away.

The high incidence of new living locality, highlights both work and extra-work considerations. Nelson district provides many opportunities for agronomy and craft. The sample contained a small group comfortable under the umbrella of "alternative lifestyles". Most of this group were among the one-third of the sample who were new followers of a rural lifestyle. The male sample's strong dissatisfaction with New Zealand society is of interest. A comparison would have to be made with non-career changers before a counter-culture hypothesis for career change (Thomas, 1979) could be said to be supported. Half of the males had included as a motive for change "getting away from the pressures of society", but this did rate highly among the three most significant factors for change (see Fig 3.8).

Satisfaction with initial career just prior to change, bore no relation to the amount of freedom of choice the subjects experienced in choosing their initial career. This does not support the view of Neapolitan (1980), who reported that satisfaction was higher for subjects who had not drifted in or been coerced into their initial career, than for others. Parental influence on initial career choice was regarded by a few subjects as significant in their decision to change. These subjects spoke also of the influence on their parent's work outlook, resulting from the depression of the 1930s. Parents had brought them up to value job security disproportionately, and they had only now acted out a challenge to this priority.

Before change, length of initial career proved to be a much stronger discriminating variable than subjects' age. Ex teachers emerged as a distinct group with relatively short initial careers. This raises the question, is it due to characteristics of the career, a reflection of a certain type of individual who enters the teaching profession, or both? For the subjects in this sample it probably relates

most to a complex interaction of variables at the time of decision. When the ex-teachers in this sample entered their teacher training course, the training college was an attractive alternative direction for those not wishing to go to university, including those who felt pressures to fulfil parental expectations of job status and security. Was the initial commitment to the teaching career comparable to commitment to different careers entered by others?

Hines (1979) in his sample of New Zealand professionals and managers found that university graduates exhibit peak job mobility several years later than non-graduates. This implies that job mobility is related to the length of time in the work force, rather than age. Peak job mobility is not a synonym for career change, but it is noteworthy that in the present study graduates spent less time in their initial careers than non-graduates, and made their career changes at the same average age as non-graduates. Careful scrutiny of the available data has failed to reveal any explanatory differences between individuals in the two samples.

The boxed in or in a rut phenomenon (Schlossberg, 1977) was very evident in the male sample. With the majority of subjects still regarding career as a central part of their life, career change for this sample was not a rejection of work. Most subjects could still have found a degree of satisfaction in their initial career. It was not surprising that subjects who considered such satisfaction possible tended to be individuals who had spent longer in their initial career.

Most of the subjects had expected the significant loss of income from making their change, and no longer considered it an issue. A number had prepared for the loss by accumulating savings. Financial rewards of the new occupation had far surpassed expectations for a few of the subjects, but a few also expressed some dissatisfaction about the time spent meeting basic financial needs. The presence of another income in the family was often there to assist the changer as only one quarter of the married



subjects had non-working wives after the change. This was not relied on by most subjects as two-thirds of the males still earned the majority of the household income.

Subjects disproportionately came from upper socio-economic backgrounds as determined by their paternal occupation. Youthful ambitions of high status careers had often been fulfilled. The sample's average socio-economic status fell significantly through the change. However, average status after the change was still above the New Zealand average. Almost all subjects regarded their change as successful. A number of the 20% for whom the change had only lived up to some of their expectations, had only recently made their change. These recent changers were optimistic that they too would reap the benefits, but it was yet too early. The major factors which had earlier restrained career change were considered by subjects to be lack of financial support, and responsibility for dependents. Clopton (1973), Neapolitan (1980) and Isaacson (1981) reported similar findings.

#### 4.1.2 Decision for Change

Increasing independence emerged as a key element in the change decision, as it was mentioned by the largest number of subjects. However, the prime motive for change was a better fit of values and work. The desire for more meaningful work was also rated highly. The prominence of these latter two factors in a decision to change career was also reported by Thomas (1980). Thomas (1979) had deduced what he termed a "developmental" or "Gauguin" explanation for mid-life career change from his similar findings. Thomas describes this explanation as viewing mid-life career change as a career development phenomenon. He uses the example of the famous painter Gauguin, who at age 35 left his clerical position to take up painting, a previous hobby. Later after re-examining his data, Thomas cautioned against concluding "blanket motivations" for change, and encouraged discovery of different types of changers.

The success/ambition ethic had not been totally rejected by the majority of subjects in this study, as



"greater achievement" was also among the top priorities for change. However, this was particularly noticeable of subjects who were in lower income brackets. One suspects desire of the unattained, goals not yet reached are often seen as having exaggerated merit. "Organizational frustrations" were also significant. The view of Constandse (1972) that this consideration is paramount to change appears inadequate to explain the observed motives for change. The evidence of the current study suggests that extra-work variables play a significant role for career changers. Increased job security (Super and Hall, 1978) was decidedly not a correlate of career change for the male sample.

Murphy and Burck (1976) had referred to a number of "inner experiences" associated with mid-life transition. Several of these were corroborated: stocktaking; comparing earlier goals with present attainments; examination of personal values, and the questioning of the meaning of life. Murphy and Burcks' (1976) suggestion of decreased self concept or broad dissatisfaction with life, should be reflected in the level of well-being. But levels of well-being for subjects were higher than the average well-being of New Zealanders. Having undergone career changes, subjects had perhaps also completed their mid-life transitions. However this is not in line with the average age of subjects, particularly as those who included the most common prime motive for change (Better fit of personal values and work) were younger than the average age of the sample. It is also significant that subjects with short initial careers tended to mention this factor and "more meaningful work", the more idealistic motives, as significant to the change.

Thomas's (1980) use of the internal/external pressure typology of Murray et al (1971), was replicated in order to test its pertinence to this New Zealand sample (see Table 1.2, p.17). Results from this replication gave a narrow distribution of responses. Therefore, it was inappropriate to assign subjects to high or low pressure categories. This was especially the case for the variable internal pressure,

to which subjects responded only in high positive categories. The selection criterion of voluntary change was at least partly responsible for this result. It eliminated one source of possible external pressure.

The incremental/rational distinction of decision type (Armstrong, 1981), by comparison proved extremely useful in discriminating groups within the total sample. The values of a number of variables in this study were seen to depend on whether individuals changed career more because of the dislike of their initial career, or their desire for an alternative situation. The ratio of subjects in the two categories was 1:2 respectively. The discriminant variables include health, past job satisfaction, attitude towards career, motives for change, loss of status through the change, as well as present job satisfaction, well-being and plans. The findings of Armstrong (1981) were supported and further extended. The subjects who left their initial careers primarily because they disliked them, could be regarded as having made the more radical decisions. They were preoccupied with the getting out, rather than the subsequent getting in. Most regarded their decision as irreversible. Their assessed well-being reflected all of these things, being lower than the rest of the sample, but nonetheless above the New Zealand average.

Although the typology used by Thomas (1980) was not appropriate for this study, many of Thomas's findings are supported: the small significance of financial considerations and the accepted fall in income; the fact that numbers of dependents have little influence on the decision to change career; the rated importance of a better fit of values and work, and desire for more meaningful work. Only half the individuals in Thomas's study had regarded "to have more time with your family" as a motive for career change. Results in the current study were similar to these. It is of some significance that the motives for change of subjects in this study include extra-work considerations, but still relate predominantly to work.



The individuals studied did not all change in the same direction in relation to the intrinsic/extrinsic work preference distinction (Andrisani and Miljus, 1977). They did not all change from seeing work as a means to end, to seeing it as a means in itself (or vice versa). The majority of males in New Zealand face retirement from work sometime during their 60s. The fact that 90% of the males in this sample do not plan to retire in the traditional sense, introduces the possibility of career change being viewed partly as a means of avoiding this.

The former colleagues of many subjects had expressed degrees of envy about the subjects leaving their career. In most cases subjects considered there to be no more restraints discouraging these people from also leaving their careers. Part of this envy must be attributable to the "grass is greener on the other side" phenomenon. Beyond this, if these colleagues really were envious, why don't they change? The lack of opportunity in the form of alternatives, accounts for but few of these individuals. The necessary courage to risk present security for the indeterminate benefits of career change, probably inhibits the majority.

#### 4.1.3 Well-being after Change

The conclusions of Kammann and Campbell (1982) and Kammann (1983) that happiness is generally unpredictable by objective circumstances, were largely supported. Well-being scores do not appear to relate to age, education, or job satisfaction. However, the finding that perceived health relates positively to well-being scores, does not corroborate that of Kammann et al (1982, 1983). The situation is well described by Diener (1984) who concludes that the relationship between health and well-being is "unclear".

Relative success of the change in terms of well-being, appears to depend on the decision type employed by the individual changing career. It is reasonable to predict that those who use an incremental decision type (i.e. are pushed), do not reap the same benefits as the rational



decision maker. The data supports this. Among the subjects, the significance of work related plans in relation to well-being is also demonstrated. Few subjects with high well-being relative to the rest of the sample, intend making alterations to the working aspect of their lives during the near future. The third link in the triaxial relationship between decision type, plans and well-being, is shown in the finding that far fewer of those who had been pulled from their initial career, intend work related changes, than those who had been pushed from careers.

#### 4.2 FEMALES

The female sample was remarkable for its similarity to the male sample. The small size of the female group, prohibits other than suggestions to be drawn from the results, and also partly accounts for the small number of statistically significant relationships encountered. Very few differences emerged between the two samples, other than those which could easily have been predicted apriori. In retrospect, this was probably due to the selection criteria. As yet, the attitudes and values which predominate in our society, result in career females adopting similar work attitudes and values to men. In other words, subjects for the total research sample were unwittingly selected on "male" criteria. Apart from causing fewer females to be selected, this was also instrumental in limiting sex differences.

A profile of the distinctive features of the female sample was developed. Fewer female than male career changers were married, or expected to have dependent children for long after their change. Fewer shifted from their living locality around the time of change. Females tended to have shorter initial careers than males, and most of those who had spouses, reported that their spouses worked. Females pulled from their past career tended to take less time over the change decision than those who were pushed. None considered "to have more time with your family" as a prime motive for change! They were even less satisfied with

aspects of New Zealand society than males and considered the change highly successful, yet most intended to alter aspects of their work in the near future. Beyond these distinguishing characteristics, this small sample of female career changers was virtually indistinguishable from the male sample.

#### 4.3 LIMITATIONS

The reduction of complex life changes to responses to a standardized questionnaire, doubtless loses some of the significant individuality of each subject. Inkson (1984) has likened survey methodology to the factory production of dinner plates. Even with the inclusion of the more open ended interview, subsequent analysis forces concentration on similarity rather than diversity. This limitation is inherent in survey research. The investigator must balance the loss of richness through objectivity, against the subjectivity of the open ended interview approach.

Studies of the kind undertaken should ideally be longitudinal. The retrospective method employed, weakens validity. Half the subjects considered their career change irreversible. These and some of the other subjects may have an incentive to exaggerate positive outcomes, to protect their self esteem. Some personal areas of life may have been inadequately covered by the questionnaire and interview questions. Reliable responses to income questions are always difficult to obtain. Practical considerations prevailed, and in-depth examinations of personal development and relationships were not specifically undertaken. The ipsative nature of the question on motives for change may have influenced responses. The wording of the question encouraged the respondent to select at least five of the possible motives and prohibited equal ranking of them. The inclusion of a motive as prime motive, therefore influenced the possible choices of a second motive. In retrospect it may have been better to include an "other - please explain" category.



Sampling technique was perhaps the most significant limitation. The fact that possible subjects were identified by members of the public, biases inclusion towards those who are more sociable, or those whose career change is more widely known. Those individuals who regard their career change as successful, are less likely to keep their past to themselves. There may be numbers of individuals who fit the study's criteria, but who regret their change. They are less likely to be so open about their past. The nett effect may have been to bias the results towards the positive consequences of radical career change.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

Notwithstanding the considerable diversity among subjects, their backgrounds, reasons for change, and the consequences thereof, a pattern for the majority emerged.

The individuals changing career in this New Zealand study, tend to be in their mid to late 30s. They are healthy, highly educated, live with their spouses and expect after their career change to still have numbers of their children living with them for some time. The majority have high status jobs, and come from high status family backgrounds. In early life they were ambitious, but came to consider themselves boxed in or stuck in a rut. Prior to the change little external pressure for change was felt, but personal desire for career change was strong. The prime motive for change is to achieve a better fit of personal values and work, but increased independence is also considered important, as is the desire for greater achievement and the avoidance of organizational frustrations. When they decide to change, 70% change for the desire of the alternative situation, and the remaining 30%, for dislike of their present career. This distinction also separates them in relation to a number of other variables. Individuals in the former group tend to consider themselves healthier, and have higher job satisfaction before the change. After they make their actual change, this group tends to have higher well-being, have higher job satisfaction,



lose less status, regard career relatively more importantly, and plan fewer work related changes than the remaining 30%. Subjects in general, once that they have changed, still regard career as a central part of their lives and consider their health to have improved. The majority are living in a different locality and few change their marital status. They have significantly higher average measures of well-being than the New Zealand population, yet on average have lost considerable income and socio-economic status through the change.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

This study has examined a group of individuals who have voluntarily left their initial careers. Some of the influences predisposing an individual to leave a career are seen to be accounted for by perceptions of the freedom and opportunity in relation to initial career choice, and the subsequent pressures, stresses and health considerations relating to work. Of more significance, one can conclude that the serious contemplation of career change signals a perceived lack of intrinsic reward, relative to alternative work. The loss of income through change is usually foreseen by career changers, and does not have an appreciable effect in negating benefits for them in terms of high well-being. The overall conclusion suggested by the data is that career change is a function of a reappraisal of personal values. This appraisal tends to lead to goals or values developed by the individual and his or her immediate social network, and away from those earlier adopted, or those advocated by the wider society. Career change in a number of cases is but one aspect of a re-ordering of the priorities determined in adolescence, and hitherto unchallenged. The earlier priority given by subjects to the "measuring sticks" of income and status espoused by our society, are relegated to lesser significance. However, the phenomenon examined is not truly a counter-culture or anti-society reaction. Few of the individuals in this study stepped deliberately away from the mainstream of society.

This study does not conclusively demonstrate the relative importance of different components of the career change decision. Further research is necessary to specifically examine elements shown to be significant, and determine more precisely their inter-relationships. Results do not support an age-related mid-life transition explanation for career change. Even considering the large age range of the subjects in this study, the majority of manifestations

considered to be hallmarks of the mid-life transition do not seem to vary with age.

Presumably, individuals make radical career decisions to attempt to increase their overall satisfaction with life. Judging by the reports of the subjects themselves, and also by their subsequent high level of well-being, most of the career changes observed were highly successful. A change of career has ramifications for so many facets of living. Whether high levels of well-being are occasioned by aspects of the new occupation itself, or by the extra-work changes it enables, is as yet unclear. Sheehy (1981) has suggested that increase in well-being which is often a consequence of career change, comes both from the feeling of having an influence on one's own destiny, and from the taking of risks. This suggests that the rewards for individuals taking active roles in terms of their future, outweigh those of passivity. In the current sample of over 100 New Zealanders who took the radical step and changed careers, this appears exemplified. What has been discovered about these individuals raises questions in relation to persons who have a strong desire to change, but as yet have not.

- (1) From the perspective of organizations: What identifies such individuals? Especially, are they distinguishable by characteristics which are detrimental to their work? What strategy is best to adopt if it is considered beneficial to retain such employees; job restructuring, retraining, or perhaps career counselling?
- (2) From the perspective of the developmental psychologist: What correlates distinguish the changer from the non-changer? What are the implications for the individual's development?
- (3) From the perspective of the possible career changer: Can I alter aspects of my current career to remove the desire for change? What are the benefits to be gained from change, and on what things do they depend?



Conversely, what are the risks? What psychological and material costs are likely to be incurred?

Tentative suggestions have been made with regard to a number of these questions. It remains for further empirical research to clarify and extend them.

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APPENDIX A

CAREER RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

P.L. Roborgh

Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury

INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.

This questionnaire is part of research currently being undertaken in relation to career decisions.

You are urged to answer ALL questions. It is stressed that everything which you tell is STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. All your replies will be kept in a separate file identified only by your number which is

---

Your name and address is needed for possible follow-up in the future, but these will be kept in a different file which is secretly coded.

NOW : I want you to go back to the time just before you made your major career change decision. Answer these next questions as if you were back at that time.

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

PART A

REMEMBER : You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

SEX: (Tick ONE)                      MALE ☐                      FEMALE ☐

AGE: (in years) i.e. just before change     

LIVING SITUATION: (Tick ONE)

- Married and living with husband/wife ☐
- Living with a partner (de facto) ☐
- Married but separated ☐
- Not married and living alone ☐
- Other (Specify ) ☐

CHILDREN

- Number of years which you can expect still to have children living with you
- 0-1 years ☐
  - 1-5 years ☐
  - 5-10years ☐
  - Over 10 years ☐

EDUCATION:

	No. of years attended	Qualifications gained
Secondary:		
University:		
Other: (e.g. Polytechnic etc.		



PART A (Continued)

REMEMBER: You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

WORK:

Jobs held : In order, from the first full time job held after leaving school, to the present job, (i.e. the job before the change).

Job Title	No.of years held	What did this involve
1st Job:		

Does your partner (spouse or defacto) work? (tick one)

YES ☐

NO	
----	--

PART A (Continued)

REMEMBER: You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

WORK: (Continued)

How many hours per week on average do you actually work on your job?

Hours per week \_\_\_\_\_

All in all, how satisfied would you say that you are with your job?  
(Tick ONE)

Very satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somewhat satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not too satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>

HOLIDAY:

How many weeks holiday on average do you take each year?

Weeks holiday per year \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH:

How do you consider your present health to be (i.e. before the change)  
(Tick ONE)

Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you consider your health to be deteriorating due to your present occupation: (Tick ONE)

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

INCOME:

REMEMBER - All information is strictly confidential. What is your personal income

(Tick <u>ONE</u> )	0 - \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10,001 - 15,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15,001 - 20,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20,001 - 25,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25,001 - 30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Over 30,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART A (Continued)

REMEMBER: You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

INCOME: (Continued)

This next question concerns your total household income over the year.  
i.e. All the money that you (and your wife/husband etc.) will get  
from wages, interest on savings, inheritance, gifts and so on.

How much of this total amount of money comes from the wages, salary  
or other income from YOUR job.

	0 - 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20 - 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Tick <u>ONE</u> )	40 - 60%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	60 - 80%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	80 - 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>



PART B

REMEMBER: You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

When you decided to make a career change, what were the most important considerations which made you change.

FIRST (A) Tick any of the following which you considered very important in causing your change decision

THEN (B) Of those ticked, choose the 5 most important (or less, if you ticked less than 5) and put them in order of importance to your decision, 1 to 5, e.g. by placing 1 in the box beside the factor you considered of MOST importance, a 2 beside the factor next important and so on.

	IMPORTANCE tick if applicable	ORDER OF 5 most important
The opinions of colleagues and friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The frustrations of working in an organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving your finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting away from the pressures of society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing your security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing your independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To have more time with your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To have more time for recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguard one's health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid being made redundant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desire for greater achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More meaningful work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The overall opinion of members of your family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To be able to live in a better locality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better fit of personal values and work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influence of your, or your spouse's parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PART B (Continued)

REMEMBER: You answer these questions as though it were just before your career change.

Please respond to the following two items by giving them a rating between -5 and +5 depending on the pressure for career change. -5 is strong pressure to remain and +5 is strong pressure to change.

	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
	strong pressure to remain in career					No Pressure	strong pressure to change career					
1.	Amount of <u>external pressure</u> to leave job											
												rating <input type="text"/>
2.	<u>Personal desire</u> to make a career change											
												rating <input type="text"/>
[Don't forget to have marked your + or -]												

Are you changing your career more for the reason that you dislike your present one OR because you would like your alternative occupation.

Which is more important?

(Tick <u>ONE</u> )	Dislike of present work	<input type="text"/>
	How much you would like your alternative occupation	<input type="text"/>

PART C

CONFIDENTIAL

This coloured page is a special sheet for recording your Name, Address, Date of Birth.

It goes into a separate file with a secret code, so that nobody but the researcher can link it up with your answers to this questionnaire.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth:

Day	Month	Year
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>





PART D

Now I wish you to come to the time THREE YEARS after your career change (or to the present if the change was less than three years ago).

NOTE: Answer these questions as if it were three years AFTER your career change (or the present time).

AGE: (in years) i.e. after the change \_\_\_\_\_

LIVING SITUATION: (Tick ONE)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Married and living with husband / wife | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Living with a partner (de facto)       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Married but separated                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not married and living alone           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Specify _____)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

CHILDREN

Number of years which you can expect to have children living with you:

- |                    |               |                          |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| (Tick <u>ONE</u> ) | 0 - 1 year    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                    | 1 - 5 years   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                    | 5 - 10 years  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                    | Over 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |

EDUCATION

Any education or any specific training you undertook just prior to or after your career change.

How long?	Details
<hr/>	

PART D (Continued)

NOTE: It is now three years AFTER your career change (or the present time)

EDUCATION (continued)

Was this considered necessary to enable the change?

(Tick ONE)

YES

☐

NO

☐

WORK:

Present Occupation		What does this involve
Job Title	Since When	

How many hours per week on average do you actually work on your job?

Hours per week \_\_\_\_\_

Does your partner (spouse or de facto) work?

(Tick ONE)

YES

☐

NO

☐

HOLIDAY:

How many weeks holiday on average do you take each year?

Weeks holiday per year \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH:

How do you consider your present health to be?

Excellent

☐

Fair

☐

(Tick ONE)

Good

☐

Poor

☐

Do you consider your health to be affected as a consequence of your new occupation.

Deteriorating

☐

(Tick ONE)

Unaffected

☐

Improving

☐



PART D (Continued)INCOME:

What is your personal income?

- (Tick ONE)
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 0 - \$10,000    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10,001 - 15,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15,001 - 20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20,001 - 25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25,001 - 30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Over 30,000     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

How much of your total household income comes from the wages, salary and other income from YOUR job?

- (Tick ONE)
- |           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| 0 - 20%   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 - 40%  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40 - 60%  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 60 - 80%  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 80 - 100% | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PART E

NOW, for the remainder of the questionnaire you may come back to the present time if you have not already done so.

N.B. It is now the present time.

What would you like to be doing FIVE years from now? (Tick ONE)

Same occupation

☐

Same type of work but with some changes

☐

Something substantially different

☐

Was there any prior testing of your new occupation, e.g. was it perhaps a developed hobby or a previous part-time occupation or any other occupation which you had some experience in.

(Tick ONE)

YES

☐

NO

☐

How reversible was your decision?

Could you possibly return to your past career without too much difficulty?

(Tick ONE)

YES

☐

NO

☐

My career is a central part of my life.

(Tick ONE)

YES

☐

NO

☐

How long after you started considering a change in career did you actually do it?

Years

Month

Weeks

Days

--	--	--	--

Please respond to the following comments by first deciding whether you on the whole mostly Agree or Disagree, and then placing either an A for AGREE or a D for DISAGREE in the box provided.

### JOB SATISFACTION

There is too little variety in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tend to get bored on the job	<input type="checkbox"/>
There must be better places to work	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like more freedom on the job	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have too small a share in deciding matters that affect my work	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job means more to me than just money	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the work I do	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job gives me a chance to do what I do best	<input type="checkbox"/>
People feel like they belong where I work	<input type="checkbox"/>

### NEEDS

For the following statements about jobs pick the response which you regard as most accurate in describing importance for you in a job in general and write its number in the box provided.

#### Responses

- (1) : Not at all important
- (2) : Not particularly important
- (3) : I am not sure about its importance
- (4) : Moderately important
- (5) : Very important
- (6) : Extremely important

#### Statements

Using your skills to the maximum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Achieving something that you personally value	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to make your own decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to learn new things	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenging work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extending your range of abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>



PART F (Continued)

LIFE SATISFACTION

How satisfied do you feel about aspects of your life at this moment?

For each of the following aspects write the number of the response which you regard as most accurate in the box provided.

Responses

- (1) : Very satisfied
- (2) : Somewhat satisfied
- (3) : Undecided
- (4) : Not too satisfied
- (5) : Not at all satisfied

Aspects

The house or flat that you live in	<input type="text"/>
The local district that you live in	<input type="text"/>
Your standard of living : the things you can buy and do	<input type="text"/>
The way you spend your leisure time	<input type="text"/>
Your present state of health	<input type="text"/>
The education you have received	<input type="text"/>
What you are accomplishing in life	<input type="text"/>
What the future seems to hold for you	<input type="text"/>
Your social life	<input type="text"/>
Your family life	<input type="text"/>
The present government	<input type="text"/>
Freedom and democracy in N.Z. today	<input type="text"/>
The state of law and order in N.Z. today	<input type="text"/>
The moral standards and values in N.Z. today	<input type="text"/>
N.Z.'s reputation in the world today	<input type="text"/>
Taking everything together, your life as a whole these days	<input type="text"/>

PART F (Continued)

The following is a questionnaire for reporting how often you have certain general feelings which are related to your emotional satisfaction and life fulfilment.

There is no point in filling out this questionnaire unless you describe your own honest feelings as best you can.

The items are either sentences or adjectives which describe different feelings about yourself and your life. For each item, please tick how often you have had that feeling over THE LAST SIX MONTHS

You have five choices for how often you have felt each feeling.

These are:

Not at all

Occasionally

Some of the time

Often

All of the time

Choose the phrase closest to your experiences. You need not spend a long time on the items.

Affectometer 2

Form A-1

Please copy the time period given in the instructions here:

(time period) THE LAST SIX MONTHS

Over this time period I have had the feeling described by (each) item ...  
(how often -- check one column only):

Not at all  
Occasionally  
Some of the time  
Often  
All the time

Feeling	Not at all	Occa- sion- ally	Some of the time	Often	All the time	For Office Use	
						(-)	(+)
1. My life is on the right track							<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I seem to be left alone when I don't want to be						<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. I feel I can do whatever I want to							<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I think clearly and creatively							<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I feel like a failure						<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Nothing seems very much fun any more						<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. I like myself							<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I can't be bothered doing anything						<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. I feel close to people around me.							<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I feel as though the best years of my life are over						<input type="checkbox"/>	

0      1      2      3      4



Affectometer 2

Form A-2

Please copy the time period given in the Instructions here:

(time period) THE LAST SIX MONTHS

Over this time period I have had the feeling described by (each) item ...  
(how often -- check one column only):

Not at all  
Occasionally  
Some of the time  
Often  
All the time

Feeling	Not at all	Occa- sion- ally	Some of the time	Often	All the time	For office Use (-) (+)
1. My future looks good.						<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have lost interest in other people and don't care about them.						<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have energy to spare.						<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I smile and laugh a lot.						<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I wish I could change some parts of my life.						<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My thoughts go around in useless circles.						<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I can handle any problems that come up.						<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My life seems stuck in a rut.						<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I feel loved and trusted.						<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I feel there must be some- thing wrong with me.						<input type="checkbox"/>
	0	1	2	3	4	

## Affectometer 2

Form B-1

Please copy the time period given in the Instructions here:

(time period) THE LAST SIX MONTHSOver this time period I have had the feeling described by (each) item ...  
(how often -- check one column only):

Not at all  
Occasionally  
Some of the time  
Often  
All the time

Feeling	Not at all	Occa- sion- ally	Some of the time	Often	All the time	For Office Use	
						(-)	(+)
1. satisfied							<input type="checkbox"/>
2. lonely						<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. free-and-easy							<input type="checkbox"/>
4. clear-headed							<input type="checkbox"/>
5. helpless						<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. impatient						<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. useful							<input type="checkbox"/>
8. depressed						<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. loving							<input type="checkbox"/>
10. hopeless						<input type="checkbox"/>	

0      1      2      3      4

Affectometer 2

Form B-2

Please copy the time period given in the instructions here:

(time period) THE LAST SIX MONTHS

Over this time period I have had the feeling described by (each) item ...  
(how often -- check one column only):

Not at all  
Occasionally  
Some of the time  
Often  
All the time

Feeling	Not at all	Occa- sion- ally	Some of the time	Often	All the time	For Office Use	
						(-)	(+)
1. optimistic							<input type="checkbox"/>
2. withdrawn						<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. enthusiastic							<input type="checkbox"/>
4. good-natured							<input type="checkbox"/>
5. discontented						<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. confused						<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. confident							<input type="checkbox"/>
8. tense						<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. understood							<input type="checkbox"/>
10. insignificant						<input type="checkbox"/>	
	0	1	2	3	4		

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION



APPENDIX BInterview Protocol

- (1) Did you have any career ambitions during your youth? e.g. Pilot, Architect, Mechanic, etc.
- (2) What was your father's occupation?
- (3) What influences lead to your first work direction: Parents? Self Choice? Opportunity?
- (4) About the Questionnaire. Are there any important things in relation to your career development which you didn't get the opportunity to mention in the Questionnaire?
- (5) Did you ever get the feeling that you were BOXED IN or IN A RUT?
- (6) Are you happy in general about the way you've developed the working part of your life until now - ANY REGRETS?
- (7) If you could imagine for a moment that 3 days ago you had won 1st prize in the Golden Kiwi, yesterday you had won the Bonus Bonds draw, and today the Pools. In other words you were totally financially independent. How would this affect the working part of your life?
- (8) Has your attitude towards the significance of work for you in your life changed during the last 10 years or so?
- (9) Have you previously had opportunities for change in the type of work you were doing and not taken them?
- (10) Why the change in work at that particular age or time?
- (11) What was the attitude towards the change of Other staff? Friends? Family? Any envy?
- (12) Did the work change enable the changes you were hoping for?
- (13) Would it at all be true to say that your new occupation is one which you have for a long time desired to do, but never really had the opportunity?
- (14) Are any of the possible benefits or spin-offs enjoyed by people other than you?
- (15) Could you have been satisfied working in a type of job related to your previous one?

- (16) What are some of the things you miss, having given up your former type of work?
- (17) What part does leisure play in your and your family's lives, and has this changed because of your change?
- (18) What were the biggest restraints from your desired change - Financial? Health? Social?
- (19) What job would you have preferred to your present one?
- (20) How do you think your family has affected your working career?
- (21) What seem to stick out for you as the best years of your life (if any)?
- (22) Thinking about any future plans you may have, without going into these, what do you see as the biggest restraints from seeing these through? Financial? Health? Social?
- (23) What is your idea of retirement?
- (24) Have any friends or acquaintances undergone a big change like you, and did this help you to make the break yourself? A sort of model.
- (25) Do you see your current situation as having different status than your previous situation?

APPENDIX C

CONTENT ANALYSIS - INTERVIEWS

1) CAREER AMBITIONS DURING YOUTH.

NONE / UNDECIDED.....  
SAME AS FIRST CAREER.....  
SAME AS PRESENT CAREER.....  
DIFFERENT DIRECTION.....

.....


STATUS

HIGHER.....  
SAME.....  
LOWER.....


2) FATHER'S CAREER

STATUS

HIGH.....  
MIDDLE.....  
LOW.....


3) INFLUENCES FOR INITIAL CAREER

PARENTS

NONE.....  
LOW.....  
HIGH.....


SELF CHOICE

NONE.....  
LOW.....  
HIGH.....


OPPORTUNITY

NONE.....  
LOW.....  
HIGH.....


OTHER

NONE.....  
LOW.....  
HIGH.....


4) ANY SIGNIFICANT EVENT NOT EXPRESSED IN QUESTIONNAIRE  
WHICH MAY AFFECT CONCLUSIONS FROM DATA AS PRESENTED

NO.....  
YES.....


ELABORATE.....  
.....  
.....

5) "BOXED IN" OR "IN A RUT"

BOXED IN.....  
IN A RUT.....  
NEITHER.....




2/

## 6) GENERAL CAREER SATISFACTION

DISSATISFIED.....  
 SATISFIED.....  
 . VERY SATISFIED.....


## 7) IF TOTALLY FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

ie DON'T HAVE TO WORK

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF LIFE STRUCTURE  
 SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF WORK.....  
 LITTLE CHANGE.....


## 8) HAS ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED

YES.....  
 NO.....


## 9) PREVIOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR WORK CHANGE NOT TAKEN

YES.....  
 NO.....


10) WHY THE CHANGE NOW/THEN ?

REASONS RELATING TO SELF

NONE .....  
 LOW.....  
 HIGH.....


FAMILY

NONE.....  
 LOW.....  
 HIGH.....


ASPECTS OF THE WORK ITSELF

NONE.....  
 LOW.....  
 HIGH.....


OTHER

OTHER.....

--

ELABORATE.....

## 11) ATTITUDE OF OTHERS

SENIOR STAFF

NONE.....  
 ENCOURAGING.....  
 DISCOURAGING.....


COLLEAGUES

NONE.....  
 ENCOURAGING.....  
 DISCOURAGING.....


FRIENDS

NONE.....  
 ENCOURAGING.....  
 DISCOURAGING.....


FAMILY

NONE.....  
 ENCOURAGING.....  
 DISCOURAGING.....


3/

12) DID THE CHANGE ENABLE THE DESIRED CHANGES

NO.....  
SOME.....  
YES.....


13) PRESENT OCCUPATION ONE WHICH YOU'VE ALWAYS DESIRED  
BUT NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY

YES.....  
NO.....


14) BENEFITS / SPIN-OFFS

PARTNER/CHILDREN.....  
PARENTS & FAMILY.....  
SOCIETY.....  
OTHERS.....  
NONE.....


15) SATISFACTION POSSIBLE IN RELATED FIELD

YES.....  
NO.....


16) MISS

SOCIAL ASPECTS.....  
MONEY.....  
STATUS.....  
SPARE TIME.....  
OTHER.....


17) LEISURE CHANGES

(IN TERMS OF TIME INVOLVED)

DECREASE.....  
SAME.....  
INCREASE.....


18) BIGGEST RESTRAINTS FROM CHANGE

FINANCIAL

COST OF ALTERNATIVE..  
DECREASED INCOME.....  
LACK OF SECURITY.....

HEALTH

OWN.....  
OTHERS.....

SOCIAL

ATTITUDES OF OTHERS..

OTHER.....

NONE.....


19) STRONGLY PREFER OTHER JOB TO PRESENT ONE

YES.....  
NO.....


20) HAS FAMILY AFFECTED WORKING CARRER

NONE.....  
LOW.....  
HIGH.....


4/

21) BEST YEARS OF LIFE

YEARS

UNDECIDED...  
10-20...  
20-30...  
30-40...  
40-50...  
YET TO COME...


22) RESTRAINTS FROM FUTURE PLANS

(AS PER 18 ) FINANCIAL

COST OF ALTERNATIVE..  
DECREASED INCOME.....  
LACK OF SECURITY.....

HEALTH

OWN.....  
OTHERS.....

SOCIAL...

ATTITUDES OF OTHERS..

OTHER..

NONE.....


23) RETIREMENT ; VOLUNTARY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FROM PRESENT

YES.....  
NO.....


24) FRIENDS OR ACQUAINTANCES UNDERGONE CHANGE

YES.....  
NO.....


EFFECTED OWN CHANGE ?

YES.....  
NO.....

A) TIME SPENT WITH FAMILY

INCREASED.....  
SAME. ....  
DECREASED.....


TIME SPENT WITH PEOPLE OUTSIDE FAMILY

INCREASED.....  
SAME. ....  
DECREASED.....


B) STATUS OF INITIAL OCCUPATION

HIGH.....  
MIDDLE.....  
LOW.....


STATUS OF PRESENT OCCUPATION

HIGH.....  
MIDDLE.....  
LOW.....
